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THE

COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

IN EIGHT PARTS

I. A. J. Wilcox. Sc.

THE

COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

THE TEXT NEWLY COLLATED AND REVISED
AND EDITED WITH A MEMOIR
AND NOTES BY

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

VOLUME FIRST

PART ONE

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TO

RICHARD GARNETT

FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE MEMORY OF

SHELLEY

THIS EDITION IS DEDICATED

PREFACE

I HAVE undertaken in this edition to collect all the poems of Shelley, to ascertain and establish an authentic text for the ordinary reader and furnish the student with a view of its sources, variations, and suggested emendations, and to give in the NOTES the history of each poem. Shelley's text stands in need of such laborious editing, to a degree exceptional in the work of modern writers, owing to the fact that such poems as he prepared for the press were inaccurately printed, and that a large proportion of the whole was published after his death from confused and varying manuscripts. The personal judgment of the editor counts for so much in any edition that a variorum text is the only just and perfect rendering of his poetry that is now possible. Nevertheless, the reproduction of the originals, whether Shelley's own editions or his manuscripts or transcripts from them, need not be exact to the point of facsimile; and, with this view, it is here limited to what is material.

The punctuation has been revised. Shelley did not — either in composing, where the points often represent merely the pauses of his mind and not of the sense, or in preparing for the press, where he relied much on Mrs. Shelley's copying though he revised it — give such attention to punctuation as to make it possible or desirable to follow his own hand; and, in such poems as were most carefully written in this respect, he practised a usage of his time that is perplexing or misleading to the ordinary reader accustomed to the habits of the press to-day. The colon and the dash were favorite points then, but are now less employed; and though the change of fashion is most marked in these examples, it is pervasive. Shelley's points, however, have been retained, as a rule, in cases where a rhetorical effect was plainly aimed at and is still secured by the points he used, and also where the melodic time or flow of the line is perceptibly affected by points that serve no other purpose. In all other cases such punctuation is employed as best discloses the structure or clarifies the sense, according to present usage. I have endeavored, nevertheless, not to depart unnecessarily from the custom of the early editions. Similarly, the spelling has been modernized. Shelley often misspelled; and, though at times he used by choice the archaic form of some particular words, his practice in regard to these is variable and in

many cases not to be determined beyond doubt. Such archaisms seem to me to have no poetic value in his poems. The simplest decision, therefore, was to employ modern forms throughout. In the matter of the use of capitals, inasmuch as they color the line perceptibly and were a means of exclamation and emphasis to Shelley, I have followed his habit, endeavoring only to make it consistent within its own limits.

The verbal text offers less difficulty. I have not corrected grammatical errors except in rare and obvious cases, where the jar of disagreement of subject and verb, for example, is in its effect like a gross misprint, and may have been so; neither have I made or adopted metrical corrections. In the choice of readings, those which seem best established have been incorporated in the text; but where variations occur in the manuscripts, the manuscript has not in all cases been given precedence of a printed text, nor a later manuscript of an earlier one, and this course has been taken on the ground that the mere existence of a manuscript reading or correction does not carry with it the conclusion that the poet had finally adopted the alteration. In fact it is common enough in the works of the poets to find the later revision rejected and the original reading maintained when true decision had to be made, on publication. In several instances, therefore, the first forms of well-

known lyrics have been retained in place of inferior versions coming from other manuscripts than those used by Shelley or Mrs. Shelley.

All material verbal variations of texts, manuscripts and transcripts are given in the footnotes, the first appearance of the variation being there cited; and, together with these, such conjectural readings as are at all to be considered. The state of all standard editions in respect to these readings is given in the additional textual notes under NOTES, where also every verbal variation, material or immaterial (except misprints, which are noted only incidentally), is recorded there also. Variations in punctuation are noted whenever material to the sense, and additional conjectural readings, not important enough to be seriously regarded; but conjectures that aim merely to correct the rhyming of Shelley are wholly omitted. I have intended thus to include every variation in word or pointing and every conjectural emendation, except in rhyming, that could be accounted, even by an exacting student, as of the slightest real interest. My own notes in criticism of these variations are as few and brief as possible, because mere inspection is in most cases sufficient to decide the better reading.

The NOTES, including the brief introduction to the longer poems and the matter at the end of each volume, are meant to give the history of each poem

so far as it is known. The method followed consists in quoting from the sources of information, which are in the main Mrs. Shelley's Notes and Shelley's correspondence. The value and interest of Mrs. Shelley's Notes are so great that they cannot be spared; and though some of the purely biographical portions have been omitted, all that is material in them, in information or illustration, has been included. Shelley's correspondence, so far as it bears on the poems, is also given with practical completeness, though here and there a passage may have been overlooked; and, read in sequence, these extracts afford the best history of Shelley's purely literary activity, set off by itself, and exhibit the state of his mind with regard to his successive poems with a fulness unusual in literary history. So plainly is this the case that the literary side of his career is passed over in the accompanying MEMOIR as lightly as possible, and the narrative is confined to the external events of his life and the impressions of his personality upon others. Notes upon the sources of the poems, or in illustration or criticism of them, have been excluded; at some future time they may be furnished in a separate publication. The prose prefaces and notes are revised, obvious errors being silently corrected, and no account of variations of their text is given, except upon important points. Here nothing is attempted beyond the personal biogra-

phy of Shelley, a complete account of the text of his poems, and the documentary history of each of them.

An editor of Shelley is under great obligations to his predecessors, which, however, it is not easy always to distribute among them. The labors of Mrs. Shelley in her editions are worthy of more recognition than she has received, and her texts of more consideration; these, with Shelley's original editions, are the foundation and mass of the whole. The labors of Dr. Garnett upon the chaotic manuscripts at Boscombe stand in the next place because of the invaluable additions thus made to the poems. Mr. Rossetti first submitted the text to careful editing, and brought to light much information in regard to it, and much new matter, and greatly stimulated its study; but he printed the text with a liberty of revision from which he receded in his later edition, to which all textual references here are made. Mr. Forman, embodying the reaction against Mr. Rossetti's liberal revision, stood for literal adherence to the originals, and was especially of service in maintaining the integrity of the text, which by the Hunt and other manuscripts he restored in important instances, while his long-continued researches cleared up many details of bibliography. Dr. Dowden's service was mainly in correcting the text of the juvenile poems in some details and increasing their number by the

recovery of several pieces which are of great value in the study of Shelley's development in his formative period. To all these editors, and also to the group of biographers and writers of reminiscences who have contributed information of their own or the result of researches, the debt of the present edition is very great, for it attempts to summarize the labors of more than half a century on Shelley's text, and on his biography so far as the biography is bound up with the text. In dealing with this whole body of Shelley literature I have treated it precisely as I should do in the case of Shakspere, thinking that what concerns Shelley belongs now to the world, and that contributions made to our knowledge of him are made for the world's sake. I have endeavored to give specific credit in all particular cases of direct obligation, and I trust that I have omitted no acknowledgment which may be thought due. It is nevertheless due to myself to say that where original sources were open to me, I have used them, and this may account for less frequent mention of preceding editions than might be thought natural.

I have the pleasure of acknowledging in particular the kindness of Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn, who placed his very complete Shelley library entirely at my disposal. From the printed books in this collection I derived the only addition to Shelley's text here made, — the interesting par-

agraph restored to the preface of "Hellas;" and from the manuscripts the extracts from unpublished letters of Shelley in the NOTES and several variorum readings of the text. The variorum readings of the Harvard College manuscripts now first find a place in an edition of Shelley, though they were edited by me in a separate publication for the College some time ago, and from that source partly utilized by Dowden. To Forman, in addition to what has been already acknowledged, I owe the variorum readings of the text of a few poems published in Hunt's "Literary Pocket-Books," of which no copies are known in this country; and, in connection with this, it may be said that imperfections in the references to the criticisms in Hunt's "Examiner" are due to the incompleteness of the files open to me. To Mr. Frederickson I am also indebted for information and advice in points of detail. The portrait which accompanies this edition is after a chalk-drawing from the original portrait at Boscombe, for which I have the pleasure of expressing my thanks to Lady Shelley.

GEORGE E. WOODBERRY.

BEVERLY, MASS., *November* 7, 1892.

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MEMOIR

In a small southwestern room of the old-fashioned country house named Field Place, in Sussex, there stands over the fireplace this inscription: —

> "Shrine of the dawning speech and thought
> Of Shelley, sacred be
> To all who bow where Time has brought
> Gifts to Eternity."

Here Percy Bysshe Shelley was born, on Saturday, August 4, 1792. He was the eldest child of Timothy and Elizabeth (Pilfold) Shelley. In this home he had for playmates, as he grew up, four younger sisters, and a brother the youngest of all: and on their memories were imprinted some scenes of his early days. He was fond of them, and as a schoolboy, when they came in to dessert, would take them on his knee and tell them romantic stories out of books on which his own imagination was fed; or he would declaim Latin for his father's pleasure; sometimes he led them on tramps through the fields, dropping his little sister over inconvenient fences, or he romped with them in the garden, not without accident, upsetting his baby brother in the strawberry bed, and being reproached by him as "bad Bit." St. Leonard's wood, off to the northeast of the house, was traditionally inhabited by an old Dragon and a headless Spectre, and there was a fabulous Great Tortoise in

Warnham Pond, which he made creatures in their children's world; nearer home was the old Snake, the familiar of the garden, unfortunately killed by the gardener's scythe; and, these not being marvels enough, a gray alchemist resided in the garret. He once dressed his sisters to impersonate fiends, and ran in front with a fire-stove flaming with magical liquids, — a sport that readily developed with schoolboy knowledge into rude and startling experiments with chemicals and electricity. Altogether he was an amiable brother, mingling high animal spirits with a delightful imagination and a gentle manner. His young pranks were numerous. He delighted in mystification, both verbal and practical; he invented incidents which he told for truth, and he especially enjoyed the ruse of a disguise. A single childish answer survives in the anecdote that when he set the fagot-stack on fire and was rebuked, he explained that he wanted "a little hell of his own." He also wished to adopt a child, — a fancy which lasted late into life, — and thought a small Gypsy tumbler at the door would serve. As child or boy, all our recollections of him are pleasant and natural, with touches of harmless mischief and vivid fancy. There was a spirit of wildness in him. Even before he went away to school, while still a fair, slight boy, with long, bright hair and full, blue eyes, running about or riding on his pony in the lanes, — where, after spending his own, he would stop and borrow money of the servant to give the beggars, — he attracted the notice of the villagers at Horsham as a madcap. Toward the end of his boyhood he liked to wander out alone at night, but the servant sent to watch him reported

that he only "took a walk and came back again." Of all the scenes of this early home life, while it was still untroubled, the most attractive is the picture impressed on his five-year-old sister, Margaret, whose closest childish memory of him was of the day when, being home ill from Eton, he first went out again, and, coming up to the window where she was, pressed his face against the pane and gave her a kiss through the glass.

His education began at the age of six, when he went for the rudiments of Latin and Greek to the Rev. Mr. Edwards, a Welsh parson at Warnham, and got traditional Welsh instruction from the old man. At ten he was sent away from home to Sion House Academy, near Brentford, under Dr. Greenlaw, whom he afterward spoke of "not without respect," says Hogg, as "a hard-headed Scotchman, and a man of rather liberal opinions." Shelley was then tall for his years, with a pink and white complexion, curling brown hair in abundance, large, prominent blue eyes, — dull in reverie, flashing in feeling, — and an expression of countenance, says his cousin and schoolfellow, Medwin, "of exceeding sweetness and innocence." He was met in the playground, shut in by four stone walls with a single tree in it, by some sixty scholars drawn from the English middle class, who, writes Medwin, pounced on every new boy with a zest proportioned to the ordeal each had undergone in his turn. The new boy in this case knew nothing of peg-top, leapfrog, fives, or cricket. One challenged him to spar, and another to race. His only welcome was "a general shout of derision." To all this, continues Medwin, "he made no reply, but with a look of dis-

dain written in his countenance, turned his back on his new associates, and, when he was alone, found relief in tears." It was but a step from the boys to the masters. If he idled over his books and watched the clouds, or drew those rude pines and cedars which he used to scrawl on his manuscripts to the end of his life, a box on the ear recalled him; and under English school discipline he had his share of flogging. "He would roll on the floor," says Gellibrand, another schoolmate, "not from the pain, but from a sense of indignity." He was a quick scholar, but he did not relish the master's coarseness in Virgil, and though he was well grounded in his classics, he owed little to such a moral discipline as he there received. He was very unhappy, and Medwin does not scruple to describe Sion House as "a perfect hell" to him. He kept much to himself, but he had pleasures of his own. He formed a taste for the wild sixpenny romances of the time, full of ghosts, bandits, and enchantments; and his curiosity in the wonders of science was awakened by a travelling lecturer, Adam Walker, who exhibited his Orrery at the school. He and Medwin boated together on the river, and ran away at times to Kew and Richmond, where Shelley saw his first play, Mrs. Jordan in the "Country Girl." Sport, however, played a small part in such a boyhood. "He passed among his schoolfellows," says Medwin, "as a strange and unsocial being, for when a holiday relieved us from our tasks, and the other boys were engaged in such sports as the narrow limits of our prison court allowed, Shelley, who entered into none of them, would pace backwards and forwards, — I think I see him now, — along the southern wall."

Rennie, another schoolmate, from whom comes the anecdote that Shelley once threw a small boy at his tormentors, adds that, "if treated with kindness he was very amiable, noble, high-spirited, and generous." It is noteworthy that at Sion House he first developed the habit of sleep-walking, for which he was punished.

A single fragment of autobiography softens the harshness of these two years. It is Shelley's description of his first boy friendship.

"I remember forming an attachment of this kind at school. I cannot recall to my memory the precise epoch at which this took place; but I imagine that it must have been at the age of eleven or twelve. The object of these sentiments was a boy about my own age, of a character eminently generous, brave and gentle; and the elements of human feeling seem to have been, from his birth, genially compounded within him. There was a delicacy and simplicity in his manners inexpressibly attractive. It has never been my fortune to meet with him since my schoolboy days; but either I confound my present recollection with the delusions of past feelings, or he is now a source of honor and utility to every one around him. The tones of his voice were so soft and winning that every word pierced into my heart; and their pathos was so deep that in listening to him the tears have involuntarily gushed from my eyes. Such was the being for whom I first experienced the sacred sentiments of friendship. I remember in my simplicity writing to my mother a long account of his admirable qualities and my own devoted attachment. I suppose she thought me out of my wits, for she returned no answer to my letter. I remember we used to walk the whole play hours up and down by some moss-covered palings, pouring out our hearts in youthful talk. We used to speak of the ladies with whom we were in

love, and I remember that our usual practice was to confirm each other in the everlasting fidelity in which we had bound ourselves toward them and toward each other. I recollect thinking my friend exquisitely beautiful. Every night when we parted to go to bed we kissed each other like children, as we still were."

Shelley went up to Eton, July 29, 1804, being then almost twelve. Dr. Goodall, an amiable and dignified gentleman, was Head Master, and was succeeded in 1809 by Dr. Keate, renowned for flogging, who was previously Master of the Lower School. Shelley went into the house of a writing master, Hecker, and later into that of George Bethel, remembered as the dullest tutor of the school. He found a larger body of scholars, some five hundred, a more regulated fagging system, and a change of masters; but if he was better off than before, it was because of his own growth and of the greater scale of the school, which afforded more freedom and variety and better companionship. He refused to fag, and he brought into the world of boyhood a compound of tastes and qualities that made him strange. "He stood apart from the whole school," says one of his mates, "a being never to be forgotten." In particular the union in him of natural gentleness with a high spirit that could be exasperated to the point of frenzy exposed him to attack; but he was dangerous, and once, according to his own account, struck a fork through the hand of a boy, — an act which he spoke of in after life as "almost involuntary," and "done on the spur of anguish." He was called "Mad Shelley" by the boys, who banded against him. Dowden describes their fun: —

"Sometimes he would escape by flight, and before he was lost sight of the gamesome youths would have chased him in full cry and have enjoyed the sport of a 'Shelley-bait' up town. At other times escape was impossible, and then he became desperate. 'I have seen him,' wrote a schoolfellow, 'surrounded, hooted, baited like a maddened bull, and at this distance of time I seem to hear ringing in my ears the cry which Shelley was wont to utter in his paroxysm of revengeful anger.' In dark and miry winter evenings it was the practice to assemble under the cloisters previous to mounting to the Upper School. To surround 'Mad Shelley' and 'nail' him with a ball slimy with mud, was a favorite pastime; or his name would suddenly be sounded through the cloisters, in an instant to be taken up by another and another voice, until hundreds joined in the clamor, and the roof would echo and re-echo with 'Shelley! Shelley! Shelley!' Then a space would be opened, in which as in a ring or alley the victim must stand to endure his torture; or some urchin would dart in behind and by one dexterous push scatter at Shelley's feet the books which he had held under his arm; or mischievous hands would pluck at his garments, or a hundred fingers would point at him from every side, while still the outcry 'Shelley! Shelley!' rang against the walls. An access of passion — the desired result — would follow, which, declares a witness of these persecutions, 'made his eyes flash like a tiger's, his cheeks grow pale as death, his limbs quiver.'"

Shelley, however, though private, was not a recluse. He took part in the school life on its public side as well as in his studies. He boated, marched in the Montem procession as pole-bearer or corporal, and declaimed a speech of Cicero on an Election Monday. He once appeared in the boy's prize ring, but panic

surprised him in the second round. He became an excellent Latin versifier and began that thoughtful acquaintance with Lucretius and Pliny's Natural History, which afterwards showed its effect in his early writings, and he learned something of Condorcet, Franklin and Godwin. Why he was called the "atheist," as the tradition is, cannot be made out, as there is no other trace of the word in the Eton vocabulary. His scientific interest was reinforced by a visit of the same itinerary Adam Walker who first revealed the mechanism of the heavens to him; and he bought an electrical machine from the philosopher's assistant, which the dull tutor, Bethel, unexpectedly felt the force of, when he undertook to investigate his lodger's instruments for "raising the devil," as Shelley boldly proclaimed his occupation to be at the moment. The willow stump which he set on fire with gunpowder and a burning glass is still shown, and there are other waifs of legend or anecdote which show his divided love for the ghosts of the cheap romances and incantations of his own invention. Chemistry, his favorite amusement, was forbidden him, and from these escapades of a youthful search for knowledge, doubtless, some of his undefined troubles with the masters arose. In the six years he passed at Eton his native intellectual impulse was the strongest element in his growth. He began authorship, and there wrote "Zastrozzi," his first published story, and with the proceeds of that romance he is said to have paid for the farewell breakfast he gave to his Eton friends at the same time that he presented them with books for keepsakes.

The reminiscences of these friends, several of whom

have spoken of him, relieve the wilder traits of his Eton career. Halliday's description is the most full and heartfelt.

"Many a long and happy walk have I had with him in the beautiful neighborhood of dear old Eton. We used to wander for hours about Clewer, Frogmore, the Park at Windsor, the Terrace; and I was a delighted and willing listener to his marvellous stories of fairy-land and apparitions and spirits and haunted ground; and his speculations were then (for his mind was far more developed than mine) of the world beyond the grave. Another of his favorite rambles was Stoke Park, and the picturesque graveyard, where Gray is said to have written his 'Elegy,' of which he was very fond. I was myself far too young to form any estimate of character, but I loved Shelley for his kindliness and affectionate ways. He was not made to endure the rough and boisterous pastime of Eton, and his shy and gentle nature was glad to escape far away to muse over strange fancies; for his mind was reflective, and teeming with deep thought. His lessons were child's play to him. . . . His love of nature was intense, and the sparkling poetry of his mind shone out of his speaking eyes when he was dwelling on anything good or great. He certainly was not happy at Eton, for his was a disposition that needed especial personal superintendence to watch and cherish and direct all his noble aspirations and the remarkable tenderness of his heart. He had great moral courage and feared nothing but what was base, and false, and low."

Such guidance as he had he received from Dr. Lind, a physician of Windsor, a man of humane disposition and independent thought, but of unconventional ways. Shelley always spoke of him in later years with veneration, and idealized him in his verse, but his influ-

ence can be traced only slightly in the habit Shelley learned from him of addressing letters to strangers. At one time, when Shelley was recovering from a fever at Field Place, and thought, on the information of a servant, that his father was contemplating sending him to an asylum, he sent for Dr. Lind, who came, and, at all events, relieved him of his fears.

While Shelley was still an Eton schoolboy Medwin spent the Christmas vacation of 1809 at Field Place, and recalls walks with him in St. Leonard's Wood, and snipe-shooting at Field Place Pond. He envied the marksmanship of Shelley, who was a good shot, pistol-shooting being a favorite amusement with him through life. Shelley was already in the full flow of his early literary faculty, which was first practised in collaboration with his friends. At Eton he at one time composed dramatic scenes with a schoolmate, and acted them before a third lower-form boy in the same house. His sister Helen says that he also sent an original play to Matthews, the comedian. He had written "Zastrozzi," and he now began a similar romance with Medwin, "The Nightmare," and also a story, having the Wandering Jew for its hero, which was immediately reworked by the joint authors into the juvenile poem of that title. By April 1, 1810, he had completed his second published romance, "St. Irvyne," and before fall came he had, in company with some one unknown (but not improbably Edward Graham, a boy brought up in the household at Field Place) produced the poems of "Victor and Cazire," of which he had 1480 copies printed at Horsham. Sir Bysshe, his grandfather, is said to have given him money to pay this village printer, but just how Shel-

ley used this liberality is unknown. Possibly the poems of his sister Helen, which he had had printed, and which were immediately secured and destroyed by the family, were issued by the help of these funds, and the experiment may have encouraged the publisher to undertake the second venture. Shelley was always in haste to publish. He had sent "The Wandering Jew" to Campbell, who returned it with discouragement, but the manuscript was, nevertheless, put into the hands of Ballantyne & Co., of Edinburgh. Shelley had begun, too, his knight-errantry in behalf of poor and oppressed authors, and while at Eton had accepted bills for the purpose of bringing out a work on Sweden, by a Mr. Brown, who, to take his own account, had been forced to leave the navy in consequence of the injustice of his superior officers. He undertook also on Medwin's introduction a correspondence with Felicia Brown, afterwards well known as Mrs. Hemans, but it was stopped on the interference of her mother, who was alarmed by its skeptical character. These were all noticeable beginnings, marking traits and habits that were to continue in Shelley's life; but the most important of all the events of the year was the attachment which was formed between him and his cousin, Harriet Grove, during a summer visit of the Grove family to Field Place, and a continuance of the intimacy at London, where the whole party, excepting Shelley's father, immediately went. Shelley's attraction toward his cousin, who is described as a very beautiful girl, amiable and of a lively disposition, was sincere if not deep. The match was seriously considered by the two families, and at first no hindrance was thrown in its way.

Shelley went up to Oxford in the fall of 1811 at the age of nineteen, with a cheerful and happy mind. He had signed his name in the books of University College, where his father had been before him, on April 10, and, returning to Eton, had finished there in good standing. His father accompanied him to his old college and saw him installed; and Mr. Slatter, then just beginning business as an Oxford publisher, a son of Timothy's old host at the Inn, remembered a kindly call from him in company with Shelley, in the course of which he said: "My son here has a literary turn. He is already an author, and do, pray, indulge him in his printing freaks." Shelley had already a publisher in London, Stockdale, afterwards notorious, whom he had induced to take the 1480 copies of the poems of "Victor and Cazire" off the hands of the Horsham printer; but hardly a hundred copies had been sold, before it was discovered that some of the verses furnished by Shelley's collaborator were plagiarized from Monk Lewis, on which, at Shelley's request, the book was withdrawn, and is now lost. Stockdale, however, undertook "St. Irvyne," and brought it out at the end of the year, and he considered "The Wandering Jew," which Ballantyne had declined; but events moved too rapidly to admit of his issuing the poem.

Shelley found at Oxford the liberty and seclusion best fitted for his active and exploring mind. There is no safer place than college for a youth whose mind is confused and excited by the crude elements of new knowledge; the chaos of thought, on which Shelley's genius sat on brood, would naturally take form and order there, in the slow leisure of four years of min-

gled acquisition, reflection and growth; but such fortune was denied to him. He maintained friendly relations with his old Eton companions, though he was intimate with none of them; but he was absorbed in the first revelation of dawning thought and knowledge, and needed an intellectual auditor. He found his listener in Hogg, — "a pearl within an oyster shell," he afterwards called him, — a fellow-student from York, destined for the law. Hogg developed into a cynical humorist; but to his gross nature and more worldly experience, Shelley was the one flash, in a lifetime, of the ideal. He always regarded him as a spirit from another world, whose adventures in his journey through mortal affairs necessarily took on the aspect of a tragi-comedy. Yet he was devoted to him to a point singular in so opposite a character, and he told his story of Shelley out of real elements, with fidelity to his own impression, though touching it with a grotesqueness that is, in its effect, not far from caricature. Hogg first met Shelley in the common dining-hall. They fell into talk, as strangers, over the comparative merits of German and Italian literature; and the conversation, being carried on with such animation that they were left alone before they were aware of it, Hogg invited his interlocutor to continue the discussion at his room, where the subject was at once dropped on their mutual confession that one knew as little of the German as the other of the Italian which he was defending. Shelley, however, was furnished with large discourse, and led the talk on to the wonders of science while Hogg scanned his guest.

"His figure was slight and fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. He was tall, but he stooped so much that he seemed of a low stature. His clothes were expensive, and made according to the most approved mode of the day; but they were tumbled, rumpled and unbrushed. His gestures were abrupt, and sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. His complexion was delicate and almost feminine, of the purest red and white; yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun, having passed the autumn, as he said, in shooting. His features, his whole face, and particularly his head, were in fact unusually small; yet the last appeared of a remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and in fits of absence, and in the agonies (if I may use the word) of anxious thought, he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers quickly through his locks unconsciously, so that it was singularly wild and rough. . . . His features were not symmetrical (the mouth perhaps excepted), yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation, a fire and enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence that I never met with in any other countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual."

The one blemish was the shrill, harsh, discordant voice, which ceased when the speaker hurried away to attend a lecture on mineralogy, — "About stones, about stones," he said, with downcast look and melancholy tones, on his return at the end of the hour. The evening continued with talk on chemistry, and at last on metaphysics and the problems of the soul, as such youthful college talks will do. "I lighted him downstairs," says Hogg, "and soon heard him running through the quiet quadrangle in the still night.

The sound became afterwards so familiar to my ear that I still seem to hear Shelley's hasty steps."

Such was Hogg's first night, and the others were like it, and are told with similar graphic power. Peacock corrects the detail of Shelley's shrill voice, while acknowledging the defect, which was "chiefly observable when he spoke under excitement. Then his voice was not only dissonant, like a jarring string, but he spoke in sharp fourths, the most unpleasing sequence of sound that can fall on the human ear; but it was scarcely so when he spoke calmly, and not at all when he read. On the contrary, he seemed then to have his voice under perfect command; it was good both in time and tone; it was low and soft, but clear, distinct and expressive." The matchless disorder of Shelley's room, with its various studious interests of books and apparatus betraying the self-guided seeker in knowledge, though similarly overcharged in the description, reflects the state of Shelley's mind. He was completely absorbed in the intellectual life. He read incessantly, as was his custom throughout life, at all times and in all places, — in bed, at meals, or in the street, threading even the crowds of London thoroughfares with a book before his eyes. His faith in great minds was an intense feeling. When he took up a classic for the first time "his cheeks glowed, his eyes became bright, his whole frame trembled." He approached Hume and Locke in the same way. What he read was thought over and discussed in the long evenings. Life went on with him, however, as it does even in revolutionary periods, with much matter of fact. He was indifferent to his meals, and showed already that abstemiousness which characterized him.

Bread was his favorite food; perhaps because it was handiest, and could be eaten with least interruption to his pursuits. In London he would go into a shop and return with a loaf, which he broke in two, giving the fragment to his astonished companion. Sweets, fruits and salads were relished, but he cared less for animal food, which he afterwards gave up wholly in his vegetarian days. Wine he took rarely, and much diluted, and, indeed, he had no taste for it. In his morals he was perfectly pure, and he was made uneasy by indelicacy, which he always resented with a maiden feeling. He was given to a bizarre kind of fun in high spirits, and occasionally to real gayety. He was always capable of a childlike light-heartedness, and from his boyhood he would sing by himself. These traits, which Hogg describes, are gathered from a longer period than their college days. At Oxford his physical regime was sufficient, if not hearty. He was well and strong.

Every afternoon the friends took a long walk across country, and Shelley always carried his pistols for practice in shooting. Several of their adventures on these walks are recorded, and are too characteristic to be wholly passed over. The picture of him feeding a little girl, mean, dull and unattractive, whom he found oppressed by cold and hunger and the vague feeling of abandonment, and drew, not without a gentle violence, to a cottage near by to get some milk for her, is one of the most vivid. "It was a strange spectacle to watch the young poet whilst . . . holding the wooden bowl in one hand and the wooden spoon in the other, and kneeling on his left knee, that he might more certainly attain to her mouth, he urged

and encouraged the torpid and timid child to eat." His adventure with the gypsy boy and girl, also, is pretty. He had met them a day or two before, and, on seeing him again, the children, with a laughing salutation, darted back into the tent and Shelley after them. "He placed a hand on each round, rough head, spoke a few kind words to the skulking children, and then returned not less precipitately, and with as much ease and accuracy as if he had been a dweller in tents from the hour when he first drew air and milk to that day." As he walked off he rolled an orange under their feet. On returning from these excursions Shelley would curl up on the rug, with his head to the fire where the heat was hottest, and sleep for three or four hours; then he woke and took supper and talked till two, which Hogg had sternly fixed as the hour to retire.

Hogg describes Shelley's figure rather than his life. He had come up to Oxford with many plans already on foot, but he constantly found something new to do. The practical instinct in him was as strong as the intellectual. He was in haste to act, and not merely from that necessity for expression which belongs to literary genius, but with that passion for realizing ideas which belongs to the reformer. In his early career the latter quality seems to predominate because its effects were obvious, and, besides, literary progress is a slower matter; but both elements worked together equally in developing his character and determining his career. Stockdale had withdrawn the poems of "Victor and Cazire," but he was publishing "St. Irvyne," and considering "The Wandering Jew." The Oxford printers undertook "The Posthumous Frag-

ments of Margaret Nicholson," a new collection of poems, and published it. These verses, in which only the slight burlesque element, due to Hogg, was contemporary, represent the results on Shelley's imagination and taste of a really earlier period, and belong with "Zastrozzi" and "St. Irvyne." His poetic taste was improving, but the ferment of his mind was now mainly intellectual, and the new elements showed their influence principally in the propagandism of his speculative opinions, his sympathy with the agitators for political reform, and his efforts to be of service to obscure writers. He continued to be interested in Brown's "Sweden," and on his last day at Oxford, became joint security with the publishers for £800 — a loss which fell upon them — to bring out the work. He also encouraged the publication (and may have undertaken to help pay for it) of a volume of poems by Miss Janetta Phillips, in whom he thought he had discovered a schoolgirl genius like Felicia Brown. He was more deeply interested in the case of Finnerty, an Irish agitator imprisoned for political publications, and published a poem, now lost, for his benefit, and subscribed his guinea to the fund for his relief; and, in connection with this case also he first addressed Leigh Hunt, urging an association of men of liberal principles for mutual protection. His acquaintance with Hume and Locke, and the writings of the English reformers, led him to skeptical views. He informed Stockdale of a novel (presumably "Leonora," which was printed but not published, and is now unknown, in which Hogg may have had the principal share) "principally constructed to convey metaphysical and political opinions by way of

conversation," and also of "A Metaphysical Essay in support of Atheism, which he intended to promulgate throughout the University." The most important expression of these new views was made in his letters to his cousin, Harriet Grove, to the alarm of herself and her parents, who communicated with Shelley's father, and broke off the match. Stockdale, also, found it to be his duty to inform Shelley's father of his son's dangerous principles, and at the same time to express injurious ideas of Hogg's influence and character. When Shelley returned home at Christmas, between the anxiety of his family over his state of mind and his own feeling of exasperation and sense of injustice in the check given to his love, he had little enjoyment. On his return to Oxford his intellectual life reached a climax in the publication of his tract "The Necessity of Atheism," which he seems to have intended as a circular letter for that irresponsible correspondence with strangers of which he had learned the habit from Dr. Lind. He strewed copies of this paper in Slatter's bookstore, where they remained on sale twenty minutes before discovery; but the friends who at once summoned him to remonstrate were shocked when he told them that he had sent copies to every bishop on the bench, to the vice-chancellor, and to each of the Heads of Houses. The college authorities did not at once act, but on March 25, they assembled and summoned him. Hogg describes what followed: —

"It was a fine spring morning, on Lady Day, in the year 1811, when I went to Shelley's room. He was absent, but before I had collected our books he rushed in. He was terribly agitated. I anxiously

inquired what had happened. 'I am expelled,' he said, as soon as he had recovered himself a little, 'I am expelled! I was sent for suddenly a few minutes ago. I went to our common room, where I found our Master and two or three of the Fellows. The Master produced a copy of the little syllabus, and asked me whether I was the author of it. He spoke in a rude, abrupt and insolent tone. I begged to be informed for what purpose he put the question. No answer was given, but the Master loudly and angrily repeated, "Are you the author of this book?" "If I can judge from your manner," I said, "you are resolved to punish me if I should acknowledge that it is my work. If you can prove that it is, produce your evidence. It is neither just nor lawful to interrogate me in such a case and for such a purpose. Such proceedings would become a court of inquisitors, but not free men in a free country." "Do you choose to deny that this is your composition?" the Master reiterated in the same rude and angry voice.' Shelley complained much of his violence and ungentlemanly deportment, saying, 'I have experienced tyranny and injustice before, and I well know what vulgar violence is, but I never met with such unworthy treatment. I told him calmly, but firmly, that I was determined not to answer any questions respecting the publication. He immediately repeated his demands. I persisted in my refusal, and he said furiously, "Then you are expelled, and I desire that you will quit the college early to-morrow morning at the latest." One of the Fellows took up two papers and handed one of them to me, — here it is.' He produced a regular sentence of expulsion drawn up in due form, under the seal of the college. . . . I have been with Shelley in many trying situations of his after life, but I never saw him so deeply shocked or so cruelly agitated as on this occasion. . . . He sat on the sofa, repeating with convulsive vehemence the words 'expelled! expelled!' his

head shaking with emotion, and his whole frame quivering."

Hogg immediately sent word that he was as much concerned in the affair as Shelley, and received straightway the same sentence. In the afternoon a notice was publicly posted on the hall door, announcing the expulsion of the two students "for contumaciously refusing to answer questions proposed to them, and for also repeatedly declining to disavow a publication entitled 'Necessity of Atheism.'" That afternoon Shelley visited his old Eton friend, Halliday, saying, "Halliday, I am come to say good-by to you, if you are not afraid to be seen with me." The next morning the two friends left Oxford for London. Medwin tells how, a day or two later, at four o'clock in the morning, Shelley knocked at his door in Garden Court in the Temple. "I think I hear his cracked voice, with his well-known pipe, 'Medwin, let me in! I am expelled!' Here followed a loud half-hysteric laugh, and the repetition of the words, 'I am expelled,' with the addition of 'for atheism.'" He and Hogg took lodgings in London, but in a few weeks the latter went home and left Shelley alone.

If Shelley was shocked, Field Place was troubled. His father demanded that he should return home, place himself submissively under a tutor, give up all connection with Hogg, apologize to the authorities at Oxford, and profess conformity to the church; otherwise he should have neither home nor money. Timothy Shelley was not a harsh man or an unfeeling father; he was kind-hearted, irascible and obstinate, inconsequential in his talk, and destitute of tact, with

character and principles neither better nor worse than respectability required. He received the world from Providence, and his opinions from the Duke of Norfolk, and was content. He was a country squire and satisfied his constituents, his tenants, his family, and his servants, and all that was his, except his father and his eldest son. It is pleasant to recall the fact that long after Shelley was dead his old nurse received her Christmas gift at the homestead to the end of her days. Timothy Shelley was both alarmed and scandalized by his son's conduct, and he was evidently sincerely concerned. He did not understand it, and he did not know what to do. At this time, too, Shelley was an important person to his family, which had recently obtained wealth and title. He was looked to, as the heir, to maintain and secure its position, and the entail was already made for a large portion of the estate, — £80,000, although a remainder of £120,000 was still unsettled. Old Sir Bysshe, who had been made a baronet in 1806, was the founder of this prosperity. If he was an abler man than Timothy, whom he was accustomed to curse roundly to his face, he was a worse man. He was miserly, sordid, and vulgar in his tastes. He professed himself an atheist, and though he appears to have favored his grandson, when young, he had set an example which profited him ill. He was born in America, where his father had emigrated early in the last century and had married with a stock not now traceable, so that there were some drops of American blood in Shelley's veins. On his father's return to England, owing to the lunacy of his elder brother, to take charge of the small family place at Fen Place, Bysshe, then eighteen

years old, went with him, and began the career of a fortune-hunter. He twice eloped with wealthy heiresses, and their property was the nucleus of the estate he built up. Two of his daughters followed his example in their mode of marrying. He had devoted himself to founding a family and had succeeded, and at the end of his days he was deeply concerned in the fate of the settlements. There were reasons, therefore, for making Shelley take a view of his place more in harmony with family expectations.

Shelley, on his side, was not lacking in family affection. He was tenderly attached to his sisters, and Hogg relates that at Oxford he never received a letter from them or his mother without manifest pleasure. He certainly left in their minds only pleasant memories of himself. He had a boy's regard for his father in early years, and his letters are, if firm, not deficient in respect. The only sign of distrust up to this period was the suspicion, already mentioned, that his father intended sending him to a lunatic asylum at the time when he was home from Eton ill with fever. But, however warm his home affections were, he was not, at the age of eighteen, prepared to abandon on command his mind and what was to him moral duty; and he declined to accede to his father's terms. His relatives, the Medwins and Groves, helped him in London, and his sisters, who were at school, sent him their pocket money by a schoolmate. In the course of six weeks, after several ineffectual letters and interviews, a settlement was brought about, apparently through a maternal uncle, Captain Pilfold, who lived near Field Place and was always Shelley's friend ; and it was agreed that Shelley should have

£200 a year and entire freedom. This was toward the middle of May, and early in June he returned home, where he was well received, though he found his favorite sister, Elizabeth, whom he hoped Hogg might marry, less confiding in her brother than before these events. He was especially struck by the fact that the principles of his parents were social conventions, and that conflict with his own ideas did not proceed from any real convictions.

In Shelley's enforced absence from his family an unknown opportunity had been given for blasting their hopes more effectual than any concession that could have been made which would have kept him near them. He had become acquainted with Harriet Westbrook in the Christmas vacation before he left Oxford. She was a schoolmate of his sisters at Mrs. Fenning's, Clapham, like Sion House a middle-class school; and he had been commissioned to take her a gift. A correspondence sprang up, which, like all of Shelley's correspondences, was confined to his opinions, as he was still in the missionary stage of conviction. When he was living in London, it was she who acted between him and his sisters and brought him their savings. There was also an elder Miss Westbrook, Eliza, thirty years old, who was very kind to Shelley; she took him to walk with Harriet, invited him to call, and was on all occasions ready to bring them together, guided the conversation upon love, and left them alone. Mr. Westbrook, Shelley noticed, was very civil. He was a retired tavern-keeper. Shelley's interest was the more engaged, because Harriet was reproached at school for being friendly with a youth of his principles, and suffered

petty annoyances. She was a pretty, bright, amiable girl, sixteen, slightly formed, with regular features, a pink and white complexion uncommonly brilliant and pure, brown hair — "like a poet's dream," says Helen ; and with this youthful bloom she had a frank air, grace, and a pleasant lively laugh. But Shelley, though interested in his "little friend," as he called her, was untouched; and when he went down to his uncle Pilfold's in May, in search of reconciliation with his father, he there met another to admire, Miss Hitchener, a school-teacher of twenty-nine, who was to hold a high place in his esteem, and with whom he began his customary correspondence on metaphysics, education, and the causes that interested him. He remained at home a month, and wrote apparently his lost poem on the fête at Carlton House, and in July went to Wales to visit his cousins, the Groves. He was taken soon after his arrival with a brief though violent nervous illness, but recovered, and was greatly delighted with the mountain scenery, then new to him. In his rambles in the neighborhood he met with that adventure with the beggar which seems to have impressed him deeply. He gave the man something and followed him a mile, trying to enter into talk with him. Finally the beggar said, "I see by your dress that you are a rich man. They have injured me and mine a million times. You appear to me well intentioned, but I have no security of it while you live in such a house as that, or wear such clothes as those. It would be charity to quit me."

The Westbrooks also were in Wales, and letters came from Harriet, who wrote despondently, complained of unhappiness at home, dwelt upon suicide,

and at last asked Shelley's protection. "Her letters," says Shelley, writing two months later to Miss Hitchener, "became more and more gloomy. At length one assumed a tone of such despair, as induced me to leave Wales precipitately. I arrived in London. I was shocked at observing the alteration in her looks. Little did I divine its cause. She had become violently attached to me, and feared that I should not return her attachment. Prejudice made the confession painful. It was impossible to avoid being much affected; I promised to unite my fate to hers. I stayed in London several days, during which she recovered her spirits. I had promised at her bidding to come again to London." This was in the early part of August. He wrote to Hogg, whom he had previously told that he was not in love, detailing the affair, and discussed with him whether he should marry Harriet, or, as she was ready to do, should disregard an institution which he had learned from Godwin to consider irrational. He went home and did not anticipate that any decision would be necessary at present. Within a week Harriet called him back because her father would force her to return to school. He went to her, took the course of honor, and in the last week of August went with her to Edinburgh, where they were married, August 28. He was nineteen, and she sixteen, years of age.

Shelley was no sooner married than he began to feel the pecuniary embarrassments which were to become familiar to him. He had never been without money, except for the six weeks in London after leaving Oxford, and he did not anticipate that his father would cut him off. He had borrowed the money for his

journey from the elder Medwin, and now, his quarterly allowance not being paid, he was kept from want only by a kindly remittance from his uncle Pilfold. Hogg had joined them at Edinburgh, but Shelley was anxious to make a settlement, and early in October the party went to York, where Shelley left Harriet in Hogg's charge while he went on to his uncle's to seek some communication with his father. Within a week he returned, unsuccessful, to York, whither Harriet's elder sister, Eliza, had preceded him. He found on his arrival that Hogg had undertaken to intrigue with Harriet. A month later, in a letter to Miss Hitchener he gave an account of the interview he had with him: —

"We walked to the fields beyond York. I desired to know fully the account of this affair. I heard it from him and I believe he was sincere. All that I can recollect of that terrible day is that I pardoned him, — fully, freely pardoned him; that I would still be a friend to him, and hoped soon to convince him how lovely virtue was; that his crime, not himself, was the object of my detestation; that I value a human being not for what it has been, but for what it is; that I hoped the time would come when he would regard this horrible error with as much disgust as I did. He said little. He was pale, terror-struck, remorseful."

After this incident Shelley remained in York but a few days, and in November left without giving Hogg any intimation of his intentions. "I leave him," wrote Shelley, "to his fate. Would that I could rescue him."

He took a cottage at Keswick. He had already written to the Duke of Norfolk, who had before been brought in as a peacemaker between father and son,

soliciting his intervention, and was invited to Greystoke by the duke, where he spent with his family a few days at the expense of almost his last guinea. He wrote to the elder Medwin: "We are now so poor as to be actually in danger of every day being deprived of the necessaries of life." In December Mr. Westbrook allowed Harriet £200 a year, and in January his father made an equal allowance to him, to prevent "his cheating strangers." At Greystoke he had met Calvert, who introduced him to Southey. "Here is a man at Keswick," wrote Southey, "who acts upon me as my own ghost would do; he is just what I was in 1794." Shelley had long regarded Southey with admiration, and "Thalaba" remained a favorite book with him. But, although Southey was kind to him, contributing to his domestic comfort in material ways, the acquaintance resulted in a diminution of Shelley's regard for him. On January 2 he introduced himself to Godwin by letter, according to his custom, having only then heard that the writer whom he really revered was still alive, and he interested the grave philosopher very earnestly in his welfare. Meanwhile he had not been idle. Through all these events, indeed, he must have kept busy with his pen. He designed a poem representing the perfect state of man, gathered his verses to make a volume, worked on his metaphysical essays, and, especially, composed a novel, "Hubert Cauvin," to illustrate the causes of the failure of the French Revolution. At Keswick, too, occurred the first of the personal assaults on Shelley, which tried the credibility of his friends. He had begun the use of laudanum, as a relief from pain, but he had recovered

from the illness which discloses this fact, before the incident occurred. On January 19, at seven o'clock at night, Shelley, hearing an unusual noise, went to the door and was struck to the ground and stunned by a blow. His landlord, alarmed by the noise, came to the scene, and the assailant fled. The affair was published in the local paper, and is spoken of by Harriet as well as Shelley. Some of the neighbors disbelieved in it, but his simple chemical experiments had excited their minds and made him an object of suspicion, and it is to be said that the country was in a disturbed state. Shelley's thoughts were already turned to Ireland as a field of practical action, and, his private affairs being now satisfactorily settled, he determined to go there and work for the cause of Catholic emancipation. At Keswick he wrote his "Address to the Irish People," and in spite of the dissuasion of Calvert and Godwin he started with his family in the first days of February, 1812, and arrived in Dublin on the 12th.

Shelley sent his "Address" to the printer, and within two weeks had fifteen hundred copies on hand, which he distributed freely, sending them to sixty coffee-houses, flinging them from his balcony, giving them away on the street, and sending out a man with them. He wrote also "Proposals for an Association," published March 2. He had presented a letter from Godwin to Curran, and made himself known to the leaders. On February 28, at a public meeting which O'Connell addressed, Shelley also spoke for an hour, and received mingled hisses and applause, — applause for the wrongs of Ireland, hisses for his plea for religious toleration. He also became acquainted

with Mr. Lawless, a follower of Curran, and wrote passages of Irish history for a proposed work by him. Meanwhile Godwin sent letters dissuading him from his course, and finally wound up, — "Shelley, you are preparing a scene of blood." Shelley's Irish principles were but remotely connected with the practical politics of the hour, and consisted, in the main, of very general convictions in regard to equality, toleration, and the other elements of republican government. He did compose, out of French sources, a revolutionary "Declaration of Rights." He was soon discouraged by the character of the men and of the situation. His heart, too, was touched by the state of the people, for he engaged at once in that practical philanthropy which was always a large part of his personal life. "A poor boy," he writes, "whom I found starving with his mother, in a hiding place of unutterable filth and misery, — whom I rescued and was about to teach, has been snatched on a charge of false and villainous effrontery to a Magistrate of Hell, who gave him the alternative of the *tender* or of military servitude. . . . I am sick of this city, and long to be with you and peace." At last he gave up, sent forward a box filled with his books, which was inspected by the government and reported as seditious, and on April 4 left Ireland. He settled ten days later at Nantgwillt, near Cwm Elan, the seat of his cousins, the Groves, and there remained until June. In this period he appears to have met Peacock, through whom he was probably introduced to his London publisher, Hookham. In June he again migrated to Lynmouth in Devon. Here he wrote his "Letter to Lord Ellenborough," defending Eaton,

who had been sentenced for publishing Paine's "Age of Reason" in a periodical. He amused himself by putting copies of the "Declaration of Rights" and a new satirical poem, "The Devil's Walk," in bottles and fire balloons, and setting them adrift by sea and air; but a more mundane attempt to circulate the "Declaration of Rights" resulted unfortunately for his servant, Dan Healy, who had become attached to him and followed him from Ireland, and was punished in a fine of £200 or eight months' imprisonment for posting it on the walls of Barnstable. Shelley could not pay the fine, but he provided fifteen shillings a week to make the prisoner's confinement more comfortable. The government now put Shelley under surveillance, and he was watched by Leeson, a spy. At Lynmouth "Queen Mab" is first heard of. In September he removed to Tanyrallt, near Tremadoc, in Wales, where he became deeply interested in a scheme of Mr. Maddock's for reclaiming some waste land by an embankment. It was a large, practical enterprise, which engaged both Shelley's imagination and his spirit of philanthropy. He subscribed £100, and on October 4, went to London, seeking to interest others in this undertaking. Here he first met Godwin, through whom he became acquainted with the Newtons, of vegetarian fame, but before this, while in Dublin, he had himself adopted that way of life. It is uncertain whether at this time he saw Godwin's daughter Mary. He renewed his acquaintance with Hogg, in whose narrative scenes of Shelley's life at this period, presented with the same vigor and vivacity as in the Oxford time, occur. None of them are more humorous than such as describe the appearance

of Miss Hitchener, who, yielding to Shelley's long expressed wish, had joined the family before they left Wales and was now an inmate of the household. Shelley had idealized her at a distance, but her near neighborhood was disenchantment. Hogg's description of his walk with the "Brown Demon," as he called her, on one arm, and the "Black Diamond," as he nicknamed Eliza, on the other, has given her an unenviable figure. She was finally got rid of, and a stipend paid her to make good the loss she had suffered by giving up her school teaching; but in her after-life she was much respected by those with whom she lived, and she appears to have remained very loyal to the poet, whose correspondence for nearly two years was so large a part of her life.

Shelley returned to Wales on November 13, going to Tanyrallt. There he worked very constantly at his essays, an unpublished collection of "Biblical Extracts" for popular distribution, and "Queen Mab." There also occurred the second assault upon him, which has been received with more distrust than any other event in his life. On February 26, between ten and eleven o'clock, Shelley, after retiring, was alarmed by a noise in the parlor below. He went down with two loaded pistols to the billiard room, and followed the sound of retreating footsteps into a small office, where he saw a man passing, through a glass window. The man fired, and Shelley's pistol flashed, on which the man knocked Shelley down, and, while they struggled, Shelley fired his second pistol, which he thought took effect. The man arose with a cry and said, "by God, I will be revenged! I will murder your wife! I will ravish your sister! By God, I will be revenged!"

He then fled. The servants were still up, and the whole family assembled in the parlor and remained for two hours. Shelley and his servant, Dan, who had that day returned from prison, sat up. At four o'clock, Harriet heard a pistol shot, and on going down, found that Shelley's clothes and the window curtain had been shot through. Dan had left the room to see what time it was, when Shelley heard a noise at the window; as he approached it, a man thrust his arm through the glass and fired. Shelley's pistol again missed fire, and he struck at the man with an old sword; while they were still struggling, Dan came back, and the man escaped. Peacock was there the next summer, and heard that persons, who examined the premises in the morning, found the grass trampled and rolled on, but there were no footprints except toward the house, and the impression of the ball on the wainscot showed that the pistol had been fired toward the window and not from it. There are other accounts of what Shelley said. In after years he ascribed the spasms of pain, from which he suffered, to the pressure of the man's knee on his body. It is not unlikely, as Dowden remarks, that Dan Healy had been followed by a spy, and it is known that Shelley was dogged by Leeson, whom he feared long afterwards. If the affair is regarded as an illusion of the sort to which Shelley was said to be subject, the material circumstances show that the event was one of intense reality to Shelley, and it is not strange that he immediately left the neighborhood, finding life there insupportable. He made a short journey to Ireland, where he arrived March 9, visited the Lakes of Killarney, and returned to Dublin, March 21. Early in April he was back in London.

On returning to London, Shelley entered again into negotiations with his father for a further settlement. He would soon be of age, and it was necessary to make some terms to prevent the loss the estate would suffer by raising money on post-obit bonds. He was much harassed by his debtors, and his father is said privately to have taken measures to relieve him from their persecutions without his knowledge. It is uncertain whether he lived in a hotel or in lodgings. His first child, Ianthe Eliza, was born in June. At the end of July he was settled at Bracknell, near the Boinvilles, who were connected with the Newtons. Here Peacock visited him, and from this time became intimate. Peacock's cold judgment, notwithstanding his frequent skepticism and imperfect knowledge of Shelley's affairs, makes his impressions valuable. To him, more than to any other external influence, is to be attributed the devotion of Shelley, which now began, to Greek studies. In the first week of October Peacock joined the family in a journey to Edinburgh, taken in a private carriage which Shelley had bought for Harriet. Nothing noteworthy occurred except that Shelley made a new convert, Baptista, a young Brazilian, who corresponded with him and partly translated "Queen Mab," which had been printed in the late spring, into Portuguese; but he died while young. Shelley returned to London in December.

Two years and a half had now passed since Shelley's marriage, and the union, in which love upon his part had not originally been an element, had become one of warm affection. Through all the vicissitudes of his wandering life it was a main source of Shelley's happiness. Time now began to disclose those limita-

tions of character and temperament which were to be anticipated. The last pleasant scene in this early married life is Peacock's description of Shelley's pleasure in his child: —

"He was extremely fond of it, and would walk up and down the room with it in his arms for a long time together, singing to it a monotonous melody of his own making, which ran on the repetition of a word of his own making. His song was 'Yáhmani, Yáhmani, Yáhmani, Yáhmani.' It did not please me; but, what was more important, it pleased the child, and lulled it when it was fretful. Shelley was extremely fond of his children. He was preëminently an affectionate father. But to the first-born there were accompaniments which did not please him. The child had a wet nurse, whom he did not like, and was much looked after by his wife's sister, whom he intensely disliked. I have often thought that if Harriet had nursed her own child, and if this sister had not lived with them, the link of their married love would not have been so readily broken."

In the autumn of 1813, on coming to London, Harriet began to vary from that description of her which Shelley had written to Fanny Godwin in December, 1812: —

"How is Harriet a fine lady? You indirectly accuse her of this offence, — to me the most unpardonable of all. The ease and simplicity of her habits, the unassuming plainness of her address, the uncalculated connection of her thought and speech, have ever formed in my eyes her greatest charm; and none of these are compatible with fashionable life, or the attempted assumption of its vulgar and noisy *éclat*."

It was to please her that he then bought a carriage and a quantity of plate, and she displayed a taste for

expensive things. On the birth of the child her intellectual sympathy with him seems to have ended. Afterwards she neither read nor studied. She was disenchanted of his views, which, Peacock mentions, she joined with him in not taking seriously; she was disenchanted, too, of the wandering life and recurring poverty to which they led.

Her sister's presence in the household became a cause of difference between her and her husband. The first expressed sign of domestic unhappiness occurs in Shelley's melancholy letter to Hogg, March 22, 1814. He had then been staying for a month with Mrs. Boinville, and looked forward with regret to ending his visit. He thus refers to Eliza: —

"Eliza is still with us, not *here*, but will be with me when the infinite malice of destiny forces me to depart. I am now but little inclined to contest this point. I certainly hate her with all my heart and soul. It is a sight which awakens an inexpressible sensation of disgust and horror to see her caress my poor little Ianthe, in whom I may hereafter find the consolation of sympathy. I sometimes feel faint with the fatigue of checking the overflowing of my unbounded abhorrence for this miserable wretch. But she is no more than a blind and loathsome worm that cannot see to sting."

Shelley felt keenly the contrast of the peaceful home in which he was staying with his own. Some years afterwards, in 1819, he wrote to Peacock: —

"I could not help considering Mrs. B. when I knew her as the most admirable specimen of a human being I had ever seen. Nothing earthly ever appeared to me more perfect than her character and manners. It is improbable that I shall ever meet again the person

whom I so much esteem and still admire. I wish, however, that when you see her you would tell her that I have not forgotten her, nor any of the amiable circle once assembled around her; and that I desired such remembrances to her as an exile and a Pariah may be permitted to address to an acknowledged member of the community of mankind."

With Mrs. Boinville and her daughter, Mrs. Turner, he now made his first acquaintance with Italian. On March 26 he remarried Harriet, who had not been with him for the previous month, in St. George's Church, London, in order to place beyond doubt the validity of the Scotch marriage and the rights of his children. Shortly afterwards, in April, Harriet again left him, and to this month belongs the poem, "Stanzas, April, 1814," the most melancholy verses he had yet written, in which he speaks of his "sad and silent home," and "its desolated hearth." During the next month Harriet was still away; and, at some time in it, he addressed to her the stanzas, "To Harriet, May, 1814," in which he appeals to her to return to him and restore his happiness, tells her that her feeling is "remorseless," that it is "malice," "revenge," "pride," and begs her to "pity if thou canst not love." There is no evidence that Harriet rejoined Shelley, and, when her residence is next discovered, in July, she was living at Bath apparently with her sister. The story of Harriet's voluntarily leaving Shelley may have sprung from this protracted absence.

Meanwhile Shelley had met Godwin's daughter, Mary, a girl of sixteen, who is described as golden haired, with a pale, pure face, hazel eyes, a somewhat grave manner, and strength both of mind and will.

Early in June he was feeling a strong attraction toward her. He confided in her, and out of their intimacy, through her sympathy, sprang that mutual love which soon became passion. The stanzas "To Mary, June, 1814," show deep feeling and a sense of doubtfulness in their position, but do not disclose any thought or suggestion of a relation other than friendship. But to Shelley, who was suffering deeply and was indeed wretched, it was not unnatural that he should reflect whether this was not one of those occasions justifying separation, which he had always held should be met by putting an end to a relation which had become false. This was his view of marriage, well known to Harriet at the time that he married her, when he had observed the ceremony for her sake, and openly repeated in his writings dedicated to her within a year. Shelley would not violate his principles by such an action; nor could it be pleaded that he had taken up with this view after obligations already incurred or subsequent to the incidents which made him desire a change. Harriet probably did not realize what Shelley's convictions were, and may have been deceived by her experience of his disposition. The natural inference from the state of the facts, which, at best, are imperfectly known, is that, as Shelley had now come of age and was in a position to make his rights of property felt, Harriet, under the guidance of her sister, who had been the intriguer from the start, desired such a settlement as would put her in possession of the social position and privileges which were at Shelley's command; that differences arose in the home, possibly on the comparatively slight question whether Eliza should continue to live with

them; and that Harriet, swayed by her sister, was endeavoring to subdue Shelley to her way by a certain hardness in her conduct, and by if not refusing to live with him, refraining from doing so. But Shelley, on his part, in Harriet's absence, had come to love Mary, and to see in following that love the way of escape from his troubles. The time was one of intense mental excitement to him, especially when the crisis came early in July. He secured Mary's consent. She was the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and of Godwin, and derived from both parents the same principles of marriage, both by practice and precept, that Shelley held. In their own eyes neither of them was committing a wrong. Shelley sent for Harriet. She came to London, and he told her his determination. She was greatly shocked and made ill by the disclosure. Shelley acted with a certain deliberation as well as with openness. He directed settlements to be made for Harriet's maintenance, and saw that she was supplied with money for the present. At the same time his state of mind was one of conflict and distress. Peacock describes his appearance: —

"Nothing that I ever read in tale or history could present a more striking image of a sudden, violent, irresistible, uncontrollable passion, than that under which I found him laboring, when, at his request, I went up from the country to call on him in London. Between his old feelings toward Harriet, from whom he was not then separated, and his new passion for Mary, he showed in his looks, in his gestures, in his speech, the state of a mind 'suffering like a little kingdom the nature of an insurrection.' His eyes were bloodshot, his hair and dress disordered. He caught up a bottle of laudanum and said, 'I never part from

this.' He added, 'I am always repeating to myself your lines from Sophocles: —

> Man's happiest lot is not to be:
> And when we tread life's thorny steep
> Most blest are they who earliest free
> Descend to death's eternal sleep.' "

Mary appears to have been determined at last by fears for Shelley's life, and on July 28 she left England with him.

It is unfortunately necessary to notice another element in the situation. It is the testimony of the common friends of Harriet and Shelley — Hogg, Peacock, and Hookham — that, up to the period of their parting, she was pure. It is said, indeed, on what must be regarded as the very doubtful authority of Miss Clairmont, that Shelley persuaded Mary to go by asserting Harriet's unfaithfulness. What is certain is that, after Harriet's death, he wrote to Mary, January 11, 1817, "I learned just now from Godwin that he has evidence that Harriet was unfaithful to me four months before I left England with you." That Godwin had such a story is known by his own evidence. The name of an obscure person, Ryan, who was acquainted with the family as early as the summer of 1813, was brought into connection with the affair. Shelley at one time doubted the paternity of his second child, Charles Bysshe, born in November, 1814, but he was afterwards satisfied that he was in error. I do not find any reliable evidence that Shelley ever maintained that he was convinced in July, 1814, of Harriet's infidelity. He afterwards believed that she had been in fault, as is shown by his letter to Southey in 1820, in which he maintains the

rightfulness of his conduct: "I take God to witness, if such a being is now regarding both you and me; and I pledge myself, if we meet, as perhaps you expect, before Him after death, to repeat the same in his presence — that you accuse me wrongfully. I am innocent of ill, either done or intended. The consequence you allude to flowed in no respect from me." At the time of the event itself, it was not necessary to Shelley's mind to have a justification which would appeal to all the world and ordinary ways of thinking; but, when time disclosed such justification, he made use of it to strengthen his action in his own eyes and the eyes of Mary, and, though only by implication, in Southey's judgment. He appears never to have mentioned the matter to others. Shelley's habitual reticence was far greater than he has ever received credit for.

Shelley and Mary had for a companion on their voyage Miss Clairmont, a daughter of the second Mrs. Godwin by her first marriage. They visited Paris, crossed France, and stopped on the shores of Lake Geneva, near Brunnen. There they remained but a short time, and, descending the Rhine to Cologne, journeyed by Rotterdam to England, where they arrived September 13. Peacock describes the following winter as the most solitary period of Shelley's life. He settled in London, and was greatly embarrassed with his affairs, endeavoring to raise money and to keep out of the way of creditors. He had written to Harriet during his journey, often saw her in London, and seems to have been upon pleasant terms with her. Godwin, who had at first been very angry, renewed his relations under the stress of his own financial difficulties, and the money to be had from Shelley.

In January, 1815, old Sir Bysshe's death greatly improved Shelley's position by making him the immediate heir. He went home, and was refused admittance by his father; but negotiations could not be long delayed. They lasted for eighteen months. He was given the choice of entailing the entire estate, £200,000, surrendering his claim to that part of the property, £80,000, which could not be taken from him, and accepting a life interest, on which condition he should receive the whole; or, refusing this, he should be deprived of the £120,000, which would go to his younger brother, John. Shelley refused to execute the entail, which he thought wrong, and yielded the larger part of the property. To pay his immediate debts he sold his succession to the fee-simple of a portion of the estate, valued at £18,000, to his father for £11,000, in June, 1815, and by the same agreement received a fixed annual allowance of £1,000, and also a considerable sum of money. He sent Harriet £200 for her debts, and directed his bankers to pay her £200 annually from his allowance. Mr. Westbrook also continued to his daughter his allowance of £200, so that she now had £400 a year.

Early in this year Shelley was told that he was dying rapidly of consumption. His health was certainly broken before this time, but every symptom of pulmonary disease suddenly and completely passed away. In February Mary's first child was born, but died within a fortnight. In the spring he settled at Bishopgate and there wrote "Alastor." In 1816, Mary's second child, William, was born. In May, Shelley, with Mary and Miss Clairmont, left England for the Continent, and within two weeks arrived at

Lake Geneva. There he became acquainted with Byron, and spent the summer boating with him. Unknown to Shelley or Mary, Miss Clairmont, before leaving London, had become Byron's mistress, and the intrigue went on at Geneva without their knowledge. There Shelley also met Monk Lewis. On returning to England, where he arrived September 7, he settled at Bath for some months. The two incidents that saddened the year occurred in quick succession. On October 8, Mary's half-sister Fanny, daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and Imlay, committed suicide by taking laudanum at an inn in Swansea. Shelley was much shocked by this event, but another blow was in store for him. He seems to have lost sight of Harriet during his residence abroad, and it is doubtful whether he saw her after reaching England. She had received her allowances regularly. In November Shelley sought for and could not find her. It is affirmed that she was living under the protection of her father until shortly before her death. She was in lodgings, however, in that month, and did not return to them after November 9. On December 10 her body was found in the Serpentine River. Of the two suicides, he said that he felt that of Fanny most acutely; but it is plain that, while he said at a later time she had "a heart of stone," the fate of Harriet brought a melancholy that was not to pass away, though he had ceased to love her. Unfortunately there is no doubt that she had erred in her life after leaving his protection, but the letters she wrote to an Irish friend excite pity and sympathy with her.

Shelley was married to Mary December 30, in St. Mildred's Church. He immediately undertook to re-

cover his children from the Westbrooks. These children had been placed, before Harriet's death, under the care of the Rev. John Kendall, at Budbrooke. The Westbrooks were determined to contest Shelley's possession of them. The affair was brought into the Chancery Court. It was set forth that Shelley was a man of atheistical and immoral principles, and "Queen Mab," which had been distributed only in a private way, was offered in proof. The case was heard early in 1817 before Lord Eldon. Shelley was represented by his lawyers. On March 27 Lord Eldon gave judgment against Shelley, basing it on his opinions as affecting his conduct. The children were not placed in the hands of the Westbrooks, but were made wards, and the persons nominated by Shelley, Dr. and Mrs. Hume, were appointed guardians. Shelley was to be allowed to visit them twelve times in the year, but only in the presence of their guardians, and the Westbrooks were given the same privilege without that restriction.

Shelley settled at Marlow early in 1817, having with him Miss Clairmont and her new-born child Allegra, and his own two children, William and Clara. In the summer he wrote "The Revolt of Islam," besides prose pamphlets upon politics; but he had now really begun his serious life as a poet. The only cloud on his happiness was the separation from his children, which his poems sufficiently illustrate. Hunt, with whom he was now intimate, says, that after the decision Shelley "never dared to trust himself with mentioning their names in my hearing, though I had stood at his side throughout the business." He was in fear lest his other children should

be taken from him; and he finally determined to leave England and settle in Italy, being partly led thereto by the state of his health, for which he was advised to try a warm climate.

The private and intimate view of Shelley, from the time of his union with Mary in the summer of 1814 to that of his final departure from England in the spring of 1818, is given by Peacock and Hunt. Peacock had become his familiar friend, though Shelley was less confidential with him than Peacock supposed. In the solitary winter of 1814–15, which was spent drearily in London, Peacock saw him often; and in the next summer, during his residence at Bishopgate, the pleasant voyage up the Thames to Lechlade was taken. It was on this excursion that Peacock's favorite prescription for Shelley's ills — "three mutton chops well peppered" — effected so sudden a cure. Peacock attributes much of Shelley's physical ills to his vegetarian diet. He observes that whenever Shelley took a journey and was obliged to live "on what he could get," as Shelley said, he became better in health, so that his frequent wanderings were beneficial to him. On these journeys, he notes, too, Shelley always took with him pistols for self-defence, and laudanum as a resource from the extreme fits of pain to which he was subject. Shelley was apprehensive of personal danger, and he had a vague fear, till he left England, that his father would attempt to restrain his liberty on a charge of madness. He also had at one time the suspicion that he was afflicted with elephantiasis. Peacock took these incidents more seriously than is at all warranted. Shelley's mind was, in general, strong, active and sound; his

industry, both in acquisition and creation, was remarkable; and the theory that he was really unbalanced in any material degree is not in harmony with his constant intellectual power, his very noticeable practical sense and carefulness in such business as he had to execute, and his adherence to fact in those cases where his account can be tested by another's. He had visions, both waking and sleeping; he had wandering fears that became ideas temporarily, perhaps approaching the point of hallucination; but to give such incidents, which are not extraordinary, undue weight is to disturb a just impression of Shelley's mind and life, as a whole, which were singularly distinguished by continual intellectual force, tenacity and consistency of principle, and studies and moral aims maintained in the midst of confusing and annoying affairs, perpetual discouragement, and bodily weariness and pain. The excess of ideality in him disturbed his judgment of women, but in other relations of life, except at times of illness, he did not vary from the normal more than is the lot of genius.

Peacock brings out, more than other friends, the manner of Shelley, his temperance in discussion, especially when his own affairs were concerned, and his serene demeanor. One anecdote is illustrative of this courtesy, and at the same time indicates that limitation under which his friendship with Peacock went on: —

"I was walking with him in Bisham Wood, and we had been talking in the usual way of our ordinary subjects, when he suddenly fell into a gloomy reverie. I tried to rouse him out of it, and made some remarks which I thought might make him laugh at his own abstraction. Suddenly he said to me, still with the

same gloomy expression: 'There is one thing to which I have decidedly made up my mind. I will take a great glass of ale every night.' I said, laughingly, 'A very good resolution, as the result of a melancholy musing.' 'Yes,' he said, 'but you do not know why I take it. I shall do it to deaden my feelings; for I see that those who drink ale have none.' The next day he said to me, 'you must have thought me very unreasonable yesterday evening?' I said, 'I did, certainly.' 'Then,' he said, 'I will tell you what I would not tell any one else. I was thinking of Harriet.' I told him I had no idea of such a thing; it was so long since he had named her."

This is the single instance of expression of the remorse which Shelley felt for Harriet's fate.

Peacock mentions the heartiness of Shelley's laughter, in connection with his failure to cultivate a taste for comedy in him, for Shelley felt the pain of comedy and its necessary insensibility to finer humane feeling; but this did not make him enjoy less his familiar, harmless humor, in which there was a dash of his early wild spirits. He was always fond of amusements of a childlike sort. Peacock thought that it was from him Shelley learned the sport of sailing paper-boats, happy if he could load them with pennies for the boys on the other side of stream or pond. At Marlow he used to play with a little girl who had attracted him, pushing a table across the floor to her, and when he went away he gave her nuts and raisins heaped on a plate, which she kept through life in memory of him, and on her death willed it, so that it is now among the few personal relics of the poet. At Marlow, too, he visited the poor in their homes, as his custom was, helping and advising. His house

there was a large one with many rooms, and handsomely furnished, the library being large enough for a ball-room, and the garden pleasant. Peacock's last service was to introduce him to the Italian opera, of which he became fond, just before leaving England.

Hunt had once seen Shelley in earlier years, and in prison had received letters of admiration and encouragement from him; but he did not really know him until the end of 1815, just at the time of Harriet's death. He is more evenly appreciative, and no such allowances as are made for Hogg and Peacock have to be observed in his case. Shelley was especially fond of Hunt's children, and would play with them to their great delight. The anecdote of their begging him "not to do the horn" (meaning that he should not twist his hair on his forehead in acting the monster) is well known. It had been the temptation of setting off fireworks with the Newton children that took Shelley away from Godwin on his first night with the philosopher and introduced him to the vegetarian circle. Hunt was in many ways more fitted by nature to enter into sympathy with Shelley than any one he had known; the friendship they formed was delightful to both, and Shelley's part in it caused him to show some of his finest qualities of tact, toleration and service, that asked no thanks and knew no bounds. On the other hand, Hunt several times defended Shelley's good name under virulent and slanderous attacks, and after his death was one of those who repeatedly spoke out for him. Hunt ascribes Shelley's disrepute in England in considerable measure to the effect of the Lord Chancellor's decree depriving him of his children. He says: —

"He was said to be keeping a seraglio at Marlow, and his friends partook of the scandal. This keeper of a seraglio, who, in fact, was extremely difficult to please in such matters, and who had no idea of love unconnected with sentiment, passed his days like a hermit. He rose early in the morning, walked and read before breakfast, took that meal sparingly, wrote and studied the greater part of the morning, walked and read again, dined on vegetables (for he took neither meat nor wine) conversed with his friends (to whom his house was ever open), again walked out, and usually finished with reading to his wife till ten o'clock, when he went to bed. This was his daily existence. His book was generally Plato, or Homer, or one of the Greek tragedies, or the Bible, in which last he took a great, though peculiar, and often admiring interest."

Hunt notices, as others have done, the great variability of Shelley's expression, due to his responsiveness to the scenes about him or his own memories, and in particular the suddenness with which he would droop into an aspect of dejection. He admired his character, and did not distrust his temperament because some of his moods might seem at the time inexplicable. He especially praises his generosity, and the noble way of it, as he had reason to do, having at one time received £1,400 from him, besides the loans (which were the same as gifts) in the ordinary course of affairs; and, indeed, nothing but its emptiness ever closed Shelley's purse to any of his friends, who, it must be said, availed themselves somewhat freely of his liberal nature. One anecdote told by Hunt brings Shelley before the eye better than pages of description, and with it he closes his reminiscences of the Marlow period: —

"Shelley, in coming to our house that night, had found a woman lying near the top of the hill in fits. It was a fierce winter night, with snow upon the ground; and winter loses nothing of its fierceness at Hampstead. My friend, always the promptest as well as most pitying on these occasions, knocked at the first houses he could reach, in order to have the woman taken in. The invariable answer was that they could not do it. He asked for an outhouse to put her in, while he went for a doctor. Impossible. In vain he assured them that she was no impostor. They would not dispute the point with him; but doors were closed, and windows shut down. . . . Time flies. The poor woman is in convulsions; her son, a young man, lamenting over her. At last my friend sees a carriage driving up to a house at a little distance. The knock is given; the warm door opens; servants and lights pour forth. Now, thought he, is the time. He puts on his best address. . . . He tells his story. They only press on the faster. 'Will you go and see her?' 'No, sir; there's no necessity for that sort of thing, depend on it. Impostors swarm everywhere. The thing cannot be done. Sir, your conduct is extraordinary.' 'Sir,' cried Shelley, assuming a very different manner and forcing the flourishing householder to stop out of astonishment, 'I am sorry to say that *your* conduct is *not* extraordinary, and if my own seems to amaze you, I will tell you something which will amaze you more, and I hope will frighten you. It is such men as you who madden the spirits and the patience of the poor and wretched; and if ever a convulsion comes in this country (as is very probable) recollect what I tell you: you will have your house, that you refuse to put the miserable woman into, burnt over your head.' 'God bless me, sir! Dear me, sir!' exclaimed the poor, frightened man, and fluttered into his mansion. The woman was then brought to our house, which was at some distance and

down a bleak path; and Shelley and her son were obliged to hold her till the doctor could arrive. It appeared that she had been attending this son in London, on a criminal charge made against him, the agitation of which had thrown her into fits on her return. The doctor said that she would have perished, had she remained there a short time longer. The next day my friend sent mother and son comfortably home to Hendon, where they were known, and whence they returned him thanks full of gratitude."

Shelley left England for the last time on March 12, 1818, and travelled by the way of Paris and Mont Cenis to Milan. Thenceforth he resided in Italy, with frequent changes of abode at first, but finally at Pisa and its neighborhood. He had now matured, and his intimate life, his nature, and his character, are disclosed by himself in the rapidly produced works on which his fame rests. From this time it is not necessary to seek in others' impressions that knowledge of himself which is the end of biography; and the singular consistency and self-possession of his character and career, as shown in his poetry and prose, and in his familiar letters, bearing out as they do the permanent traits of his disposition already known, and correcting or shedding light upon what was extraordinary in his personality, give the best reason for belief that much in Shelley's earlier career which seems abnormal is due to the misapprehension and the misinterpretation of him by his friends. It was the life of a youth, impulsive and self-confident, and, moreover, it is the only full narrative of youth which our literature affords. If the thoughts and actions of first years were more commonly and minutely detailed, there might be less wonder, less distrust,

less harsh judgment upon what seems erratic and foolish in Shelley's early days. His misfortune was that immaturity of mind and judgment became fixed in imprudent acts; his practical responsibility forerun its due time. Yet the story, as it stands, demonstrates generous aims, a sense of human duty, an interest in man's welfare, and a resolution to serve it, as exceptional as Shelley's poetic genius, intimate as the tie was between the two; for he was right in characterizing his poetic genius as in the main a moral one. The latter years, during which his life is contained and expressed in his works, require less attention to such details as have been followed thus far; his life in manhood must be read in his poetry and prose, and especially in his letters, but some account of external affairs is still necessary.

He had taken Miss Clairmont and her child with him, but at Milan the baby, Allegra, was sent to Byron, who undertook her bringing up and education. He enjoyed the opera at Milan, and made an excursion to Como in search of a house, but finally decided to go further south, and departed, on May 1, for Leghorn, where the party arrived within ten days. The presence there of the Gisbornes, old friends of Godwin, drew him to that city, which became, with Pisa, his principal place of residence. Mrs. Gisborne was a middle-aged woman of sense and experience, and possessed of much literary cultivation. She had been brought up as a girl, in the East, and had married Reveley, the student of Athenian antiquities, in Rome. He was a Radical, and on returning to England became associated with Godwin, Holcroft, and others of the group of reformers;

and in this way it happened that when Mary's mother died at her child's birth, Mrs. Reveley took the babe home and cared for it. Two years later, when Reveley died, Godwin proposed marriage to her, but was refused; and afterwards she married Mr. Gisborne, with whom she had lived in Italy for some years. She welcomed Mary with great cordiality, and the pleasantest relations, which were only once broken, sprang up between the families. She introduced Shelley to Calderon, and read Spanish with him, as time went on, greatly to his pleasure; and, on his side, he became attached to her son, Henry Reveley, a young engineer, and especially assisted him in the scheme of putting a steamboat on the Mediterranean; but the plan, in which Shelley had embarked capital, failed. It was in the financial complications springing out of this affair that opportunity was given for the breach of confidence which then occurred, as Shelley thought he was to be defrauded; but the trouble between them was amicably settled. These events took place at a later time.

Shelley did not at once settle in Leghorn, but took a house at the Baths of Lucca, where he spent a quiet period, pleased with the scene, his walks and rides, the bath under the woodland waterfall, and all the first delights of Italy, while he was not blind to its miseries. He finished "Rosalind and Helen," which he had begun at Marlow, and translated Plato's "Symposium." Miss Clairmont had already begun to be discontented at the separation from Allegra, and was far from comforted by what news reached her of Byron's life at Venice. Shelley yielded to her anxiety and, on August 19, accompanied her by Florence

to Venice, where Byron received him cordially, and offered him his villa at Este, where her mother, whose presence in Venice was concealed, would be permitted to see Allegra. Shelley wrote to Mary, who left Lucca August 30, and the family was soon settled at Este. Here their youngest child, Clara, sickened, and, on their taking her at once to Venice for advice, she died in that city, September 24. The loss made the autumn lonely at Este, but there, except for brief visits to Byron, Shelley remained, writing the "Lines on the Euganean Hills," "Julian and Maddalo," and the first act of "Prometheus Unbound." His poetic genius had come somewhat suddenly to its mastery, and his mind was full of great plans, keeping it restless and absorbed, while his melancholy seemed to deepen. On November 5 they departed for the south, Miss Clairmont still accompanying them, and she continued to live with them. They arrived at Rome November 20, and, remaining only a week, were settled at Naples December 1. Here Shelley was intoxicated with the beauty of Italy; he visited Pompeii, ascended Vesuvius, and went south as far as Paestum, and in his letters gives marvellously beautiful descriptions of these scenes; but he was, for causes which remain obscure, deeply dejected and unhappy to such a degree that he hid his verses from Mary and disclosed no more of his grief than he could help. She ascribed his melancholy to physical depression, but there were other reasons, never satisfactorily made out. He worked but little, only at finishing and remodelling old poems, except that he wrote the well-known personal poems of that winter.

On March 5 they returned to Rome, and there he

plucked up courage again, and finished three acts of "Prometheus Unbound," writing in that wilderness of beauty and ruin which he describes with a sad eloquence. Here the most severe domestic sorrow they were to undergo came upon them in the death of their boy, William, on June 7. Shelley watched by him for sixty hours uninterruptedly, and immediately was called on to forget his grief and sustain Mary, who sank under this last blow. "Yesterday," he wrote to Peacock, "after an illness of only a few days, my little William died. There was no hope from the moment of the attack. You will be kind enough to tell all my friends, so that I need not write to them. It is a great exertion to me to write even this, and it seems to me as if, hunted by calamity as I have been, that I should never recover any cheerfulness again." He removed with Mary at once to Leghorn, that she might have Mrs. Gisborne's company, and there spent the summer. "The Cenci" was the work of these months, written in a tower on the top of his house overlooking the country. On October 2 they went to Florence, where his last child, Percy, was born November 12. The galleries were a perpetual delight to him, and especially the sculptures, on which he made notes and from which he derived poetic stimulus. Here he wrote the fourth act of "Prometheus Unbound," finishing that poem.

On January 27 they removed to Pisa, where they found a friend in Mrs. Mason, one of the Earl of Kingston's daughters whom Mary Wollstonecraft had once in charge. She was one of their set of acquaintances from this time. Shelley was much troubled in the opening months of this year, 1820, by

Godwin's complaints and embarrassments, but as he had already given Godwin £4,000 or £5,000, and in order to do it had divested himself, as he reminded Godwin, of four or five times this amount, which he had raised from money-lenders, and as he was really unable to accomplish anything by such sacrifices, he receded from the impossible task of extricating him from debt. Miss Clairmont, too, toward whom Shelley's conduct is tenderly considerate and manly, caused him trouble by her anxiety about Allegra, and her inability to keep on good terms with Mary, who was now unwilling that she should continue with them. His discharged servant, Paolo, also was a source of uneasiness and exasperation, as he first attempted to blackmail Shelley and then spread scandals about his private life, which were taken up in Italy and echoed in England. On June 15 they again removed to Leghorn, taking the house of the Gisbornes, and on August 5 went for the summer to the Baths of San Giuliano near Pisa. To these months belong "The Witch of Atlas," and "Œdipus Tyrannus;" but Shelley's principal works were the occasional pieces. He had become greatly discouraged by the continued neglect of the public, and by the personal attacks to which his character was subjected in England. He certainly felt keenly his position as an outcast, and though his enthusiasm for political causes was undiminished and flamed up in "The Mask of Anarchy," and the "Odes," his spirit was depressed and hopeless. Miss Clairmont left them at the end of the summer, and became a private governess in Florence, though from time to time she visited them. On October 22 Medwin joined them for some months, and directly

after, on October 29, they returned from the Baths to Pisa for the winter. Here their circle of acquaintance was now large, and included Professor Pacchiani, Emilia Viviani, Prince Mavrocordato, the Princess Argiropoli, Sgricci, Taaffe, — new names, but, excepting two, of minor importance. Emilia Viviani was a young lady who interested Mary and Miss Clairmont as well as Shelley in her misfortunes. She was the occasion of "Epipsychidion," in writing which Shelley expressed his full idealization of woman as the object of love and in so doing broke the charm of this last object of his idolatry. The event ended in exciting a certain jealousy in Mary, who was soon disenchanted of the distressed maiden; but she continued to be treated by all with the greatest kindness. Mavrocordato was the occasion of Shelley's keener interest in the Greek revolt, which was expressed in "Hellas," an improvisation of 1821, and he was welcome also to Mary, who read Greek with him. The most important addition to the circle was Edward Williams and his wife, Jane, who came on January 13, 1821, and were Shelley's constant and most prized companions, from this time to the end. The summer was spent at the Baths of Giuliano, where "Adonais" was composed, except that Shelley went to Ravenna to see Byron in August; and the winter was passed at Pisa, where Byron settled in November with the Countess Guiccioli. Medwin also returned and joined the circle. It was proposed, too, to invite Hunt, who was in straits, to Italy, and a plan was made for him to join with Byron in issuing "The Liberal" there, and in consequence of this arrangement, and by Shelley's free but self-denying material aid, he

was enabled to come, but did not arrive so soon as was hoped.

Such, in rapid outline, was the external course of Shelley's life in these four Italian years up to the spring of 1822. He had accomplished his poetic work, though it remained in large part unpublished, and he looked upon himself as having failed, — not that he did not know that his work was good, but that it had received no recognition. In private life he had continued to meet with grave misfortune, and his character still stood blackened and traduced in the eyes of the world. His life with Mary had been a happy one, but he had early learned that it was his part to deny himself and contain his own moods and sorrows. It is plain that he felt a lack of perfect sympathy between them, a certain coldness, and something like fault-finding with him because of his persistent difference from the world and its ways. He was pained by this, and made solitary, and Mary afterwards was aware of it, as her self-reproaches show; but the union, notwithstanding, was one of tender affection in the midst of many circumstances that might have disturbed it. To Shelley's continued loneliness must be ascribed the deep melancholy of his verses to Mrs. Williams, the sheaf of poems that was the last of all. Edward Williams, who had been at Eton in Shelley's time, may have had some knowledge of him, but he was practically a new acquaintance. He was manly and generous by nature, and had a taste for literature, though his previous life had been an active one. Shelley became much attached to him, and found in his company, as they boated on the Serchio together, great enjoyment.

Both he and Mary express warm admiration for their friend. Mrs. Williams suffered the same idealization that Shelley had wrought about every woman who attracted him at all; and the peace and happiness of her life with her husband especially won upon him. The verses he wrote her were kept secret from Mary, and have the personal and intimate quality of poems meant for one alone to read. This friendship was the last pleasure that Shelley was to know, and Williams was to be his companion in death.

Trelawny, from whom the true description of Shelley at the end of life comes, joined the circle January 14, 1822. He had led a romantic life as a sailor, and was now twenty-eight years old when he sought out Shelley, and made friends with Byron, and through these friendships became an interesting character to the world. The scene of his introduction to Shelley has been often quoted: —

"The Williamses received me in their earnest, cordial manner. We had a great deal to communicate to each other, and were in loud and animated conversation, when I was rather put out by observing in the passage near the open door opposite to where I sat a pair of glittering eyes steadily fixed on mine. It was too dark to make out whom they belonged to. With the acuteness of a woman, Mrs. Williams's eyes followed the direction of mine, and going to the doorway she laughingly said, 'Come in, Shelley; it's only our friend Tre, just arrived.' Swiftly gliding in, blushing like a girl, a tall, slim stripling held out both his hands; and, although I could hardly believe, as I looked at his flushed, feminine and artless face, that it could be the poet, I returned his warm pressure. After the ordinary greetings and courtesies he sat down and listened. I was silent from astonish-

ment. Was it possible this mild-looking, beardless boy could be the veritable monster at war with all the world? — excommunicated by the Fathers of the Church, deprived of his civil rights by the fiat of a grim Lord Chancellor, discarded by every member of his family, and denounced by the rival sages of our literature as the founder of a Satanic school? I could not believe it; it must be a hoax. . . . He was habited like a boy in a black jacket and trousers, which he seemed to have outgrown, or his tailor, as is the custom, had most shamefully stinted him in his 'sizings.' Mrs. Williams saw my embarrassment and, to relieve me, asked Shelley what book he had in his hand. His face brightened, and he answered briskly, 'Calderon's "Magico Prodigioso." I am translating some passages in it.' 'Oh, read it to us!' Shoved off from the shore of commonplace incidents, that could not interest him, and fairly launched on a theme that did, he instantly became oblivious of everything but the book in his hand. The masterly manner in which he analyzed the genius of the author, his lucid interpretation of the story, and the ease with which he translated into our language the most subtle and imaginative passages of the Spanish poet were marvellous, as was his command of the two languages. After this touch of his quality I no longer doubted his identity. A dead silence ensued. Looking up I asked, 'Where is he?' Mrs. Williams said, 'Who? Shelley? Oh, he comes and goes like a spirit, no one knows when or where.' Presently he reappeared with Mrs. Shelley."

Trelawny's whole narrative is very vivid and clear, and, in particular, he renders the boyishness of Shelley better than Hogg or Peacock, who turned it to ridicule. He found in him the old qualities, however, and many of the old habits. He still read or wrote incessantly, and could close his senses to the

world around, even at Byron's dinner-parties, and withdraw to his own thoughts. He had no regular habits of eating, and lived on water and bread, – "bread literally his staff of life." He could jump into the water, on being told to swim, and lie quiet on the bottom till "fished out," — an incident that would have read very differently in Hogg or Peacock, but is here told with perfect nature. He was self-willed. "I always go on till I am stopped, and I never am stopped," he said. He had filled Williams with enthusiasm for self-improvement, and won him over wholly to books and thought and poetizing, just as he always sought to do with his friends, men or women. He was as passionately fond of boating as ever and eager for the craft he had ordered for the summer, which they were to spend in the Gulf of Spezia, as had been decided; and he wandered out alone into the Pine Forest to write, as when he composed "Alastor." The same features, the same traits, are here as of old, — with the difference that they are told naturally without the suggestion of grotesqueness on one side or of incipient lunacy on the other. This sustains our belief in Shelley's always having been a natural being, subject to no more of eccentricity or disease than exists within the bounds of an ordinary healthy nature. "He was like a healthy, well-conditioned boy," says Trelawny. The gentle timidity is here, too, the half ludicrous fear of a "party" with which Mary had "threatened" him, and similar shynesses that existed in his temperament, with the openness that knew no wrong where no wrong was meant. His dislike of Byron, mixed with admiration of his genius and discouragement in its presence, is not concealed, and the

vigor and brilliancy of his talk, its eloquent flow, together with his spells of sadness and the physical spasms that made him roll on the floor, but with self-command and words of unforgetting kindness for those about him who were obliged to look on, and also the constant discouragement of his spirits in respect to himself and his life, — are all spread on these pages, which are biographically of the highest value. It is fortunate that there is so faithful a witness of these last days; but this memoir must draw to a close without lingering over the last portrait.

The plan to pass the summer on the Gulf of Spezia was carried out. On May 1, after some difficulties in finding a place of abode, Shelley was settled in the Casa Magni, a lonely house on the edge of the sea, under steep and wooded slopes, beneath which rocky footpaths wound to Lerici on the south and to the near village of San Terenzo on the north. The Williamses were with him, and, temporarily, Miss Clairmont, to whom in the first days he there broke the news of the death of Allegra. The spot is one of indescribable beauty, with lovely views, both near and distant, wherever the eye wanders or rests; but it had also an aspect of wildness and strangeness, which depressed Mary's spirits. "The gales and squalls," she says, "that hailed our first arrival surrounded the bay with foam. The howling winds swept round our exposed house, and the sea roared unremittingly. . . . The natives were wilder than the place. Our near neighbors of San Terenzo were more like savages than any people I ever before lived among. Many a night they passed on the beach singing, or rather howling, the women dancing about among the waves that broke at

their feet, the men leaning against the rocks and joining in their loud, wild chorus." It was among these villagers that Shelley's last offices of charity were done, as he visited them in their houses, and helped the sick and the poor as he was able. On May 12 arrived the boat which Shelley christened the Ariel, — "a perfect plaything for the summer," Williams said. They made also a shallop of canvas and reeds, and in one or the other of these crafts he incessantly boated. He wrote "The Triumph of Life," going off by himself in his shallop in the moonlight. Mary thought it was the happiest period in his life. "I still inhabit this divine bay," he wrote, "reading Spanish dramas, and sailing and listening to the most enchanting music." Again he says, "If the past and future could be obliterated, the present would content me so well that I could say with Faust to the passing moment, — 'Remain thou, thou art so beautiful.' " Mary unfortunately was not so happy, and she says, took no pleasure excepting when "sailing, lying down with my head on his knee, I shut my eyes and felt the wind and our swift motion alone." She was also at one time dangerously ill, and Shelley himself was far from well. The house was a place of visions. One night, when with Williams, he saw Allegra as a naked child rise from the waves, clapping her hands; again he saw the image of himself, who asked him, "How long do you mean to be content?" And Mrs. Williams twice saw Shelley when he was not present.

Two months passed by in this retreat, and it was now time for Leigh Hunt to arrive. Shelley set off to meet him at Leghorn, taking Williams and the

sailor-boy, Charles Vivian, with him. Mary called Shelley back two or three times and told him that if he did not come soon she should go to Pisa, with their child Percy, and cried bitterly when he went away. The next day he arrived at Leghorn. Thornton Hunt always remembered the cry with which Shelley rushed into his father's arms, saying, "I am inexpressibly delighted! you cannot think how inexpressibly happy it makes me." He saw the Hunts settled, and arranged affairs between Hunt and Byron; but both he and Williams were anxious to return to their families in their lonely situation. On July 8 they set sail in the Ariel, not without warning of risk. The weather was threatening, and in a few moments they were lost in a sea-fog. Trelawny describes the scene: —

"Although the sun was obscured by mists it was oppressively sultry. There was not a breath of air in the harbor. The heaviness of the atmosphere and an unwonted stillness benumbed my senses. I went down into the cabin and sank into a slumber. I was roused up by a noise overhead, and went on deck. The men were getting up a chain cable to let go another anchor. There was a general stir amongst the shipping; shifting berths, getting down yards and masts, veering out cables, hauling in of hawsers, letting go anchors, hailing from the ships and quays, boats sculling rapidly to and fro. It was almost dark, although only half past six. The sea was of the color and looked as solid and smooth as a sheet of lead, and covered with an oily scum; gusts of wind swept over without ruffling it, and big drops of rain fell on its surface, rebounding, as if they could not penetrate it. There was a commotion in the air, made up of many threatening sounds, coming upon us from the sea. Fishing craft and coasting vessels under bare poles rushed by us in

shoals, running foul of the ships in the harbor. As yet the din and hubbub was that made by men, but their shrill pipings were suddenly silenced by the crashing voice of a thunder squall that burst right over our heads. For some time no other sounds were to be heard than the thunder, wind and rain. When the fury of the storm, which did not last for more than twenty minutes, had abated, and the horizon was in some degree cleared, I looked to seaward anxiously, in the hope of descrying Shelley's boat amongst the many small crafts scattered about. I watched every speck that loomed on the horizon, thinking that they would have borne up on their return to the port, as all the other boats that had gone out in the same direction had done. I sent our Genoese mate on board some of the returning crafts to make inquiries, but they all professed not to have seen the English boat. . . . During the night it was gusty and showery, and the lightning flashed along the coast; at daylight I returned on board and resumed my examinations of the crews of the various boats which had returned to the port during the night. They either knew nothing or would say nothing. My Genoese, with the quick eye of a sailor, pointed out on board a fishing boat an English-made oar that he thought he had seen in Shelley's boat, but the entire crew swore by all the saints in the calendar that this was not so. Another day was passed in horrid suspense. On the morning of the third day I rode to Pisa. Byron had returned to the Lanfranchi Palace. I hoped to find a letter from the Villa Magni; there was none. I told my fears to Hunt, and then went upstairs to Byron. When I told him his lip quivered, and his voice faltered as he questioned me."

Trelawny sent a courier to Leghorn and ordered the Bolivar to cruise along the coast. He himself took his horse and rode. At Via Reggio he recog-

nized a punt, a water keg, and some bottles that had been on Shelley's boat, and his fears became almost certainties. To quicken their watchfulness he promised rewards to the coast-guard patrol. On July 18 two bodies were found. "The tall, slight figure, the jacket, the volume of Æschylus in one pocket, and Keats's poems in the other, doubled back as if the reader in the act of reading had hastily thrust it away, were all too familiar to me to leave a doubt on my mind that this mutilated corpse was any other than Shelley's." The second body was that of Williams. A few days later, the body of the sailor-boy, Charles Vivian, was also found. Trelawny went on to Lerici and broke the news to the two widows there, who, after suffering great suspense, and going to Pisa and returning, still hoped against hope through these days.

There was nothing more to be done except that the last offices must be discharged. The bodies had been buried in the sand, but permission was obtained from the authorities to burn them. Trelawny took charge. He had a furnace made, and provided what else was necessary. On the first day Williams's body was burned, and on the second, August 18, Shelley's. Three white wands had been stuck in the sand to mark the grave, but it was nearly an hour before his body was found. The preparations were then completed. Only Byron and Hunt besides Trelawny and some natives of the place were present. "The sea," says Trelawny, "with the islands of Gorgona, Capraja and Elba, was before us. Old battlemented watch towers stretched along the coast, backed by the marble-crested Apennines glistening in the sun, picturesque from their diversified outlines, and not a human dwel-

ling was in sight." And Hunt takes up the description: "The beauty of the flame arising from the funeral pile was extraordinary. The weather was beautifully fine. The Mediterranean, now soft and lucid, kissed the shore as if to make peace with it. The yellow sand and blue sky were intensely contrasted with one another; marble mountains touched the air with coolness, and the flame of the fire bore away toward heaven in vigorous amplitude, wavering and quivering with a brightness of inconceivable beauty." Wine, oil and salt were thrown on the pile, and with them the volume of Keats, and all was slowly consumed. Trelawny snatched the heart from the flames. Hunt and Byron hardly maintained themselves, but at last all was over, and they rode away. The ashes were deposited in the English burying ground at Rome, in the now familiar spot, where Trelawny placed a slab in the ground and inscribed it: —

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
COR CORDIUM
NATUS IV AUG. MDCCXCII
OBIIT VIII JUL. MDCCCCXXII

"Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange."

QUEEN MAB

A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM

WITH NOTES

ECRASEZ L'INFAME!
Correspondance de Voltaire.

Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante
Trita solo; juvat integros accedere fonteis;
Atque haurire: juvatque novos decerpere flores.
. . . . . .
Unde prius nulli velarint tempora Musæ.
Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus; et arctis
Religionum animos nodis exsolvere pergo.
LUCRETIUS, lib. iv.

Δὸς ποῦ στῶ, καὶ κόσμον κινήσω.
ARCHIMEDES.

Queen Mab was issued at London during the summer of 1813, in an edition of two hundred and fifty copies, under Shelley's name as author and printer. The text was probably composed within the year preceding, but earlier materials seem to have been embodied in it. The volume was privately circulated, apparently to the number of not more than seventy copies. The poem was afterwards revised by Shelley, the first two and last two sections being recast and some changes made in the intervening part; of this revised text the first two sections were published by Shelley with *Alastor* in 1816, as a fragment, under the title, *The Daemon of the World*, and the rest, which remained in MS., was published by Forman in 1876; the whole is printed in the present edition under FRAGMENTS, *The Daemon of the World*. The usual text of *Queen Mab* is that of Shelley, 1813. Mrs. Shelley's, 1839[1], omits several passages; but these, with an immaterial and probably accidental exception, were restored in her next edition, 1839[2]. Rossetti, 1870, constructed a new text by dovetailing, according to his own judgment, the original and revised texts published by Shelley, Forman's additions not being then available. The history of the poem, together with Shelley's *Notes*, will be found in the NOTES at the end of this volume.

TO HARRIET *****

Whose is the love that, gleaming through the world,
Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn?
Whose is the warm and partial praise,
Virtue's most sweet reward?

Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul
Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
And loved mankind the more?

Harriet! on thine: — thou wert my purer mind;
Thou wert the inspiration of my song;
Thine are these early wilding flowers,
Though garlanded by me.

Then press into thy breast this pledge of love;
And know, though time may change and years may roll,
Each floweret gathered in my heart
It consecrates to thine.

QUEEN MAB

I

How wonderful is Death,
Death, and his brother Sleep!
One, pale as yonder waning moon
With lips of lurid blue;
The other, rosy as the morn
When throned on ocean's wave
It blushes o'er the world;
Yet both so passing wonderful!

Hath then the gloomy Power
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres
Seized on her sinless soul?
Must then that peerless form
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, those azure veins
Which steal like streams along a field of snow,
That lovely outline which is fair
As breathing marble, perish?
Must putrefaction's breath
Leave nothing of this heavenly sight
But loathsomeness and ruin?
Spare nothing but a gloomy theme,
On which the lightest heart might moralize?
Or is it only a sweet slumber
Stealing o'er sensation,

Which the breath of roseate morning
Chaseth into darkness?
Will Ianthe wake again,
And give that faithful bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life and rapture, from her smile?

Yes! she will wake again,
Although her glowing limbs are motionless,
And silent those sweet lips,
Once breathing eloquence
That might have soothed a tiger's rage
Or thawed the cold heart of a conqueror.
Her dewy eyes are closed,
And on their lids, whose texture fine
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs beneath,
The baby Sleep is pillowed;
Her golden tresses shade
The bosom's stainless pride,
Curling like tendrils of the parasite
Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?
'Tis like the wondrous strain
That round a lonely ruin swells,
Which, wandering on the echoing shore,
The enthusiast hears at evening;
'Tis softer than the west wind's sigh;
'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes
Of that strange lyre whose strings
The genii of the breezes sweep;
Those lines of rainbow light
Are like the moonbeams when they fall

Through some cathedral window, but the tints
Are such as may not find
Comparison on earth.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen !
Celestial coursers paw the unyielding air ;
Their filmy pennons at her word they furl,
And stop obedient to the reins of light ;
These the Queen of Spells drew in ;
She spread a charm around the spot,
And, leaning graceful from the ethereal car,
Long did she gaze, and silently,
Upon the slumbering maid.

Oh ! not the visioned poet in his dreams,
When silvery clouds float through the wildered
brain,
When every sight of lovely, wild and grand
Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,
When fancy at a glance combines
The wondrous and the beautiful, —
So bright, so fair, so wild a shape
Hath ever yet beheld,
As that which reined the coursers of the air
And poured the magic of her gaze
Upon the maiden's sleep.

The broad and yellow moon
Shone dimly through her form —
That form of faultless symmetry ;
The pearly and pellucid car

78 *sleeping maid*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

Moved not the moonlight's line.
'Twas not an earthly pageant.
Those, who had looked upon the sight
Passing all human glory,
Saw not the yellow moon,
Saw not the mortal scene,
Heard not the night-wind's rush,
Heard not an earthly sound,
Saw but the fairy pageant,
Heard but the heavenly strains
That filled the lonely dwelling.

The Fairy's frame was slight — yon fibrous cloud,
That catches but the palest tinge of even,
And which the straining eye can hardly seize
When melting into eastern twilight's shadow,
Were scarce so thin, so slight; but the fair star
That gems the glittering coronet of morn,
Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful,
As that which, bursting from the Fairy's form,
Spread a purpureal halo round the scene,
Yet with an undulating motion,
Swayed to her outline gracefully.

From her celestial car
The Fairy Queen descended,
And thrice she waved her wand
Circled with wreaths of amaranth;
Her thin and misty form
Moved with the moving air,
And the clear silver tones,
As thus she spoke, were such
As are unheard by all but gifted ear.

FAIRY

"Stars! your balmiest influence shed!
Elements! your wrath suspend!
Sleep, Ocean, in the rocky bounds
That circle thy domain!
Let not a breath be seen to stir
Around yon grass-grown ruin's height!
Let even the restless gossamer
Sleep on the moveless air!
Soul of Ianthe! thou,
Judged alone worthy of the envied boon
That waits the good and the sincere; that waits
Those who have struggled, and with resolute will
Vanquished earth's pride and meanness, burst the chains,
The icy chains of custom, and have shone
The day-stars of their age; — Soul of Ianthe!
Awake! arise!"

Sudden arose
Ianthe's Soul; it stood
All beautiful in naked purity,
The perfect semblance of its bodily frame;
Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace —
Each stain of earthliness
Had passed away — it reassumed
Its native dignity and stood
Immortal amid ruin.

Upon the couch the body lay,
Wrapt in the depth of slumber;
Its features were fixed and meaningless,

Yet animal life was there,
And every organ yet performed
Its natural functions; 'twas a sight
Of wonder to behold the body and the soul.
The self-same lineaments, the same
Marks of identity were there;
Yet, oh, how different! One aspires to Heaven,
Pants for its sempiternal heritage,
And, ever changing, ever rising still,
Wantons in endless being:
The other, for a time the unwilling sport
Of circumstance and passion, struggles on;
Fleets through its sad duration rapidly;
Then like an useless and worn-out machine,
Rots, perishes, and passes.

FAIRY

"Spirit! who hast dived so deep;
Spirit! who hast soared so high;
Thou the fearless, thou the mild,
Accept the boon thy worth hath earned,
Ascend the car with me!"

SPIRIT

"Do I dream? Is this new feeling
But a visioned ghost of slumber?
If indeed I am a soul,
A free, a disembodied soul,
Speak again to me."

FAIRY

"I am the Fairy MAB: to me 'tis given
The wonders of the human world to keep;

The secrets of the immeasurable past,
In the unfailing consciences of men,
Those stern, unflattering chroniclers, I find;
The future, from the causes which arise
In each event, I gather; not the sting
Which retributive memory implants
In the hard bosom of the selfish man,
Nor that ecstatic and exulting throb
Which virtue's votary feels when he sums up
The thoughts and actions of a well-spent day,
Are unforeseen, unregistered by me;
And it is yet permitted me to rend
The veil of mortal frailty, that the spirit,
Clothed in its changeless purity, may know
How soonest to accomplish the great end
For which it hath its being, and may taste
That peace which in the end all life will share.
This is the meed of virtue; happy Soul,
Ascend the car with me!"

The chains of earth's immurement
Fell from Ianthe's spirit;
They shrank and brake like bandages of straw
Beneath a wakened giant's strength.
She knew her glorious change,
And felt in apprehension uncontrolled
New raptures opening round;
Each day-dream of her mortal life,
Each frenzied vision of the slumbers
That closed each well-spent day,
Seemed now to meet reality.

The Fairy and the Soul proceeded;
The silver clouds disparted;
And as the car of magic they ascended,
Again the speechless music swelled,
Again the coursers of the air
Unfurled their azure pennons, and the Queen,
Shaking the beamy reins,
Bade them pursue their way.

The magic car moved on.
The night was fair, and countless stars
Studded heaven's dark blue vault;
Just o'er the eastern wave
Peeped the first faint smile of morn.
The magic car moved on —
From the celestial hoofs
The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew,
And where the burning wheels
Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak,
Was traced a line of lightning.
Now it flew far above a rock,
The utmost verge of earth,
The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow
Lowered o'er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot's path,
Calm as a slumbering babe,
Tremendous Ocean lay.
The mirror of its stillness showed
The pale and waning stars,
The chariot's fiery track,
And the gray light of morn
Tinging those fleecy clouds
That canopied the dawn.

Seemed it that the chariot's way
Lay through the midst of an immense concave
Radiant with million constellations, tinged
With shades of infinite color,
And semicircled with a belt
Flashing incessant meteors.

The magic car moved on.
As they approached their goal,
The coursers seemed to gather speed;
The sea no longer was distinguished; earth
Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere;
The sun's unclouded orb
Rolled through the black concave;
Its rays of rapid light
Parted around the chariot's swifter course,
And fell, like ocean's feathery spray
Dashed from the boiling surge
Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.
Earth's distant orb appeared
The smallest light that twinkles in the heaven;
Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems rolled
And countless spheres diffused
An ever-varying glory.
It was a sight of wonder: some
Were hornèd like the crescent moon;
Some shed a mild and silver beam
Like Hesperus o'er the western sea;
Some dashed athwart with trains of flame,
Like worlds to death and ruin driven;

Some shone like suns, and as the chariot passed,
Eclipsed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here —
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose immensity
Even soaring fancy staggers,
Here is thy fitting temple!
Yet not the lightest leaf
That quivers to the passing breeze
Is less instinct with thee;
Yet not the meanest worm
That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead,
Less shares thy eternal breath!
Spirit of Nature! thou,
Imperishable as this scene —
Here is thy fitting temple!

II

If solitude hath ever led thy steps
To the wild ocean's echoing shore,
And thou hast lingered there,
Until the sun's broad orb
Seemed resting on the burnished wave,
Thou must have marked the lines
Of purple gold that motionless
Hung o'er the sinking sphere;
Thou must have marked the billowy clouds,
Edged with intolerable radiancy,
Towering like rocks of jet
Crowned with a diamond wreath;
And yet there is a moment,
When the sun's highest point

Peeps like a star o'er ocean's western edge,
When those far clouds of feathery gold,
Shaded with deepest purple, gleam
Like islands on a dark blue sea;
Then has thy fancy soared above the earth
And furled its wearied wing
Within the Fairy's fane.

Yet not the golden islands
Gleaming in yon flood of light,
Nor the feathery curtains
Stretching o'er the sun's bright couch,
Nor the burnished ocean-waves
Paving that gorgeous dome,
So fair, so wonderful a sight
As Mab's ethereal palace could afford.
Yet likest evening's vault, that faëry Hall!
As Heaven, low resting on the wave, it spread
Its floors of flashing light,
Its vast and azure dome,
Its fertile golden islands
Floating on a silver sea;
Whilst suns their mingling beamings darted
Through clouds of circumambient darkness,
And pearly battlements around
Looked o'er the immense of Heaven.

The magic car no longer moved.
The Fairy and the Spirit
Entered the Hall of Spells.
Those golden clouds
That rolled in glittering billows
Beneath the azure canopy,

With the ethereal footsteps trembled not;
The light and crimson mists,
Floating to strains of thrilling melody
Through that unearthly dwelling,
Yielded to every movement of the will;
Upon their passive swell the Spirit leaned,
And, for the varied bliss that pressed around,
Used not the glorious privilege
Of virtue and of wisdom.

"Spirit!" the Fairy said,
And pointed to the gorgeous dome,
"This is a wondrous sight
And mocks all human grandeur;
But, were it virtue's only meed to dwell
In a celestial palace, all resigned
To pleasurable impulses, immured
Within the prison of itself, the will
Of changeless Nature would be unfulfilled.
Learn to make others happy. Spirit, come!
This is thine high reward: — the past shall rise;
Thou shalt behold the present; I will teach
The secrets of the future."

The Fairy and the Spirit
Approached the overhanging battlement.
Below lay stretched the universe!
There, far as the remotest line
That bounds imagination's flight,
Countless and unending orbs
In mazy motion intermingled,
Yet still fulfilled immutably
Eternal Nature's law.

Above, below, around,
The circling systems formed
A wilderness of harmony;
Each with undeviating aim,
In eloquent silence, through the depths of space
Pursued its wondrous way.

There was a little light
That twinkled in the misty distance.
None but a spirit's eye
Might ken that rolling orb.
None but a spirit's eye,
And in no other place
But that celestial dwelling, might behold
Each action of this earth's inhabitants.
But matter, space, and time,
In those aërial mansions cease to act;
And all-prevailing wisdom, when it reaps
The harvest of its excellence, o'erbounds
Those obstacles of which an earthly soul
Fears to attempt the conquest.

The Fairy pointed to the earth.
The Spirit's intellectual eye
Its kindred beings recognized.
The thronging thousands, to a passing view,
Seemed like an ant-hill's citizens.
How wonderful! that even
The passions, prejudices, interests,
That sway the meanest being — the weak touch
That moves the finest nerve
And in one human brain
Causes the faintest thought, becomes a link
In the great chain of Nature!

"Behold," the Fairy cried,
"Palmyra's ruined palaces!
Behold where grandeur frowned!
Behold where pleasure smiled!
What now remains? — the memory
Of senselessness and shame.
What is immortal there?
Nothing — it stands to tell
A melancholy tale, to give
An awful warning; soon
Oblivion will steal silently
The remnant of its fame.
Monarchs and conquerors there
Proud o'er prostrate millions trod —
The earthquakes of the human race;
Like them, forgotten when the ruin
That marks their shock is past.

"Beside the eternal Nile
The Pyramids have risen.
Nile shall pursue his changeless way;
Those Pyramids shall fall.
Yea! not a stone shall stand to tell
The spot whereon they stood;
Their very site shall be forgotten,
As is their builder's name!

"Behold yon sterile spot,
Where now the wandering Arab's tent
Flaps in the desert blast!
There once old Salem's haughty fane
Reared high to heaven its thousand golden domes,

And in the blushing face of day
Exposed its shameful glory.
Oh! many a widow, many an orphan cursed
The building of that fane; and many a father,
Worn out with toil and slavery, implored
The poor man's God to sweep it from the earth
And spare his children the detested task
Of piling stone on stone and poisoning
The choicest days of life
To soothe a dotard's vanity.
There an inhuman and uncultured race
Howled hideous praises to their Demon-God;
They rushed to war, tore from the mother's womb
The unborn child — old age and infancy
Promiscuous perished; their victorious arms
Left not a soul to breathe. Oh! they were fiends!
But what was he who taught them that the God
Of Nature and benevolence had given
A special sanction to the trade of blood?
His name and theirs are fading, and the tales
Of this barbarian nation, which imposture
Recites till terror credits, are pursuing
Itself into forgetfulness.

"Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta stood,
There is a moral desert now.
The mean and miserable huts,
The yet more wretched palaces,
Contrasted with those ancient fanes
Now crumbling to oblivion, —
The long and lonely colonnades
Through which the ghost of Freedom stalks, —
Seem like a well-known tune,

Which in some dear scene we have loved to hear,
Remembered now in sadness.
But, oh! how much more changed,
How gloomier is the contrast
Of human nature there!
Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's slave,
A coward and a fool, spreads death around —
Then, shuddering, meets his own.
Where Cicero and Antoninus lived,
A cowled and hypocritical monk
Prays, curses and deceives.

"Spirit! ten thousand years
Have scarcely passed away,
Since in the waste, where now the savage drinks
His enemy's blood, and, aping Europe's sons,
Wakes the unholy song of war,
Arose a stately city,
Metropolis of the western continent.
There, now, the mossy column-stone,
Indented by time's unrelaxing grasp,
Which once appeared to brave
All, save its country's ruin, —
There the wide forest scene,
Rude in the uncultivated loveliness
Of gardens long run wild, —
Seems, to the unwilling sojourner whose steps
Chance in that desert has delayed,
Thus to have stood since earth was what it is.
Yet once it was the busiest haunt,
Whither, as to a common centre, flocked
Strangers, and ships, and merchandise;
Once peace and freedom blest

The cultivated plain;
But wealth, that curse of man,
Blighted the bud of its prosperity;
Virtue and wisdom, truth and liberty,
Fled, to return not, until man shall know
That they alone can give the bliss
Worthy a soul that claims
Its kindred with eternity.

"There 's not one atom of yon earth
But once was living man;
Nor the minutest drop of rain,
That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,
But flowed in human veins;
And from the burning plains
Where Libyan monsters yell,
From the most gloomy glens
Of Greenland's sunless clime,
To where the golden fields
Of fertile England spread
Their harvest to the day,
Thou canst not find one spot
Whereon no city stood.

"How strange is human pride!
I tell thee that those living things,
To whom the fragile blade of grass
That springeth in the morn
And perisheth ere noon,
Is an unbounded world;
I tell thee that those viewless beings,
Whose mansion is the smallest particle
Of the impassive atmosphere,

Think, feel and live like man;
That their affections and antipathies,
Like his, produce the laws
Ruling their moral state;
And the minutest throb
That through their frame diffuses
The slightest, faintest motion,
Is fixed and indispensable
As the majestic laws
That rule yon rolling orbs."

The Fairy paused. The Spirit,
In ecstasy of admiration, felt
All knowledge of the past revived; the events
Of old and wondrous times,
Which dim tradition interruptedly
Teaches the credulous vulgar, were unfolded
In just perspective to the view;
Yet dim from their infinitude.
The Spirit seemed to stand
High on an isolated pinnacle;
The flood of ages combating below,
The depth of the unbounded universe
Above, and all around
Nature's unchanging harmony.

III

"Fairy!" the Spirit said,
And on the Queen of Spells
Fixed her ethereal eyes,
"I thank thee. Thou hast given
A boon which I will not resign, and taught

A lesson not to be unlearned. I know
The past, and thence I will essay to glean
A warning for the future, so that man
May profit by his errors and derive
Experience from his folly;
For, when the power of imparting joy
Is equal to the will, the human soul
Requires no other heaven."

MAB

"Turn thee, surpassing Spirit!
Much yet remains unscanned.
Thou knowest how great is man,
Thou knowest his imbecility;
Yet learn thou what he is;
Yet learn the lofty destiny
Which restless Time prepares
For every living soul.

"Behold a gorgeous palace that amid
Yon populous city rears its thousand towers
And seems itself a city. Gloomy troops
Of sentinels in stern and silent ranks
Encompass it around; the dweller there
Cannot be free and happy; hearest thou not
The curses of the fatherless, the groans
Of those who have no friend? He passes on —
The King, the wearer of a gilded chain
That binds his soul to abjectness, the fool
Whom courtiers nickname monarch, whilst a slave
Even to the basest appetites — that man
Heeds not the shriek of penury; he smiles
At the deep curses which the destitute

Mutter in secret, and a sullen joy
Pervades his bloodless heart when thousands groan
But for those morsels which his wantonness
Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save
All that they love from famine; when he hears
The tale of horror, to some ready-made face
Of hypocritical assent he turns,
Smothering the glow of shame, that, spite of him,
Flushes his bloated cheek.

Now to the meal
Of silence, grandeur and excess he drags
His palled unwilling appetite. If gold,
Gleaming around, and numerous viands culled
From every clime could force the loathing sense
To overcome satiety, — if wealth
The spring it draws from poisons not, — or vice,
Unfeeling, stubborn vice, converteth not
Its food to deadliest venom; then that king
Is happy; and the peasant who fulfils
His unforced task, when he returns at even
And by the blazing fagot meets again
Her welcome for whom all his toil is sped,
Tastes not a sweeter meal.

Behold him now
Stretched on the gorgeous couch; his fevered brain
Reels dizzily awhile; but ah! too soon
The slumber of intemperance subsides,
And conscience, that undying serpent, calls
Her venomous brood to their nocturnal task.
Listen! he speaks! oh! mark that frenzied eye —
Oh! mark that deadly visage!

KING

" No cessation !
Oh ! must this last forever ! Awful death,
I wish, yet fear to clasp thee ! — Not one moment
Of dreamless sleep ! O dear and blessèd Peace,
Why dost thou shroud thy vestal purity
In penury and dungeons ? Wherefore lurkest
With danger, death, and solitude ; yet shun'st
The palace I have built thee ? Sacred Peace !
Oh, visit me but once, — but pitying shed
One drop of balm upon my withered soul ! "

THE FAIRY

" Vain man ! that palace is the virtuous heart,
And Peace defileth not her snowy robes
In such a shed as thine. Hark ! yet he mutters ;
His slumbers are but varied agonies ;
They prey like scorpions on the springs of life.
There needeth not the hell that bigots frame
To punish those who err ; earth in itself
Contains at once the evil and the cure ;
And all-sufficing Nature can chastise
Those who transgress her law ; she only knows
How justly to proportion to the fault
The punishment it merits.

Is it strange
That this poor wretch should pride him in his woe ?
Take pleasure in his abjectness, and hug
The scorpion that consumes him ? Is it strange
That, placed on a conspicuous throne of thorns,
Grasping an iron sceptre, and immured

Within a splendid prison whose stern bounds
Shut him from all that's good or dear on earth,
His soul asserts not its humanity?
That man's mild nature rises not in war
Against a king's employ? No — 'tis not strange.
He, like the vulgar, thinks, feels, acts, and lives
Just as his father did; the unconquered powers
Of precedent and custom interpose
Between a *king* and virtue. Stranger yet,
To those who know not Nature nor deduce
The future from the present, it may seem,
That not one slave, who suffers from the crimes
Of this unnatural being, not one wretch,
Whose children famish and whose nuptial bed
Is earth's unpitying bosom, rears an arm
To dash him from his throne!

Those gilded flies
That, basking in the sunshine of a court,
Fatten on its corruption! what are they? —
The drones of the community; they feed
On the mechanic's labor; the starved hind
For them compels the stubborn glebe to yield
Its unshared harvests; and yon squalid form,
Leaner than fleshless misery, that wastes
A sunless life in the unwholesome mine,
Drags out in labor a protracted death
To glut their grandeur; many faint with toil
That few may know the cares and woe of sloth.

Whence, thinkest thou, kings and parasites arose?
Whence that unnatural line of drones who heap
Toil and unvanquishable penury

On those who build their palaces and bring
Their daily bread? — From vice, black loathsome
vice;
From rapine, madness, treachery, and wrong;
From all that genders misery, and makes
Of earth this thorny wilderness; from lust,
Revenge, and murder. — And when reason's voice,
Loud as the voice of Nature, shall have waked
The nations; and mankind perceive that vice
Is discord, war and misery; that virtue
Is peace and happiness and harmony;
When man's maturer nature shall disdain
The playthings of its childhood; — kingly glare
Will lose its power to dazzle; its authority
Will silently pass by; the gorgeous throne
Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall,
Fast falling to decay; whilst falsehood's trade
Shall be as hateful and unprofitable
As that of truth is now.

Where is the fame
Which the vain-glorious mighty of the earth
Seek to eternize? Oh! the faintest sound
From time's light footfall, the minutest wave
That swells the flood of ages, whelms in nothing
The unsubstantial bubble. Ay! to-day
Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the gaze
That flashes desolation, strong the arm
That scatters multitudes. To-morrow comes!
That mandate is a thunder-peal that died
In ages past; that gaze, a transient flash
On which the midnight closed; and on that arm
The worm has made his meal.

The virtuous man,
Who, great in his humility as kings
Are little in their grandeur; he who leads
Invincibly a life of resolute good
And stands amid the silent dungeon-depths
More free and fearless than the trembling judge
Who, clothed in venal power, vainly strove
To bind the impassive spirit; — when he falls,
His mild eye beams benevolence no more;
Withered the hand outstretched but to relieve;
Sunk reason's simple eloquence that rolled
But to appall the guilty. Yes! the grave
Hath quenched that eye and death's relentless frost
Withered that arm; but the unfading fame
Which virtue hangs upon its votary's tomb,
The deathless memory of that man whom kings
Call to their minds and tremble, the remembrance
With which the happy spirit contemplates
Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth,
Shall never pass away.

"Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;
The subject, not the citizen; for kings
And subjects, mutual foes, forever play
A losing game into each other's hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery. The man
Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys.
Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Makes slaves of men, and of the human frame
A mechanized automaton.

151 *Who* || *As*, Rossetti.

When Nero
High over flaming Rome with savage joy
Lowered like a fiend, drank with enraptured ear
The shrieks of agonizing death, beheld
The frightful desolation spread, and felt
A new-created sense within his soul
Thrill to the sight and vibrate to the sound, —
Thinkest thou his grandeur had not overcome
The force of human kindness? And when Rome
With one stern blow hurled not the tyrant down,
Crushed not the arm red with her dearest blood,
Had not submissive abjectness destroyed
Nature's suggestions?

Look on yonder earth:
The golden harvests spring; the unfailing sun
Sheds light and life; the fruits, the flowers, the trees,
Arise in due succession; all things speak
Peace, harmony and love. The universe,
In Nature's silent eloquence, declares
That all fulfil the works of love and joy, —
All but the outcast, Man. He fabricates
The sword which stabs his peace; he cherisheth
The snakes that gnaw his heart; he raiseth up
The tyrant whose delight is in his woe,
Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun,
Lights it the great alone? Yon silver beams,
Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch
Than on the dome of kings? Is mother earth
A step-dame to her numerous sons who earn
Her unshared gifts with unremitting toil;
A mother only to those puling babes

Who, nursed in ease and luxury, make men
The playthings of their babyhood and mar
In self-important childishness that peace
Which men alone appreciate?

"Spirit of Nature, no!
The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs
Alike in every human heart.
Thou aye erectest there
Thy throne of power unappealable;
Thou art the judge beneath whose nod
Man's brief and frail authority
Is powerless as the wind
That passeth idly by;
Thine the tribunal which surpasseth
The show of human justice
As God surpasses man!

"Spirit of Nature! thou
Life of interminable multitudes;
Soul of those mighty spheres
Whose changeless paths through Heaven's deep silence lie;
Soul of that smallest being,
The dwelling of whose life
Is one faint April sun-gleam;—
Man, like these passive things,
Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth;
Like theirs, his age of endless peace,
Which time is fast maturing,
Will swiftly, surely, come;
And the unbounded frame which thou pervadest,
Will be without a flaw
Marring its perfect symmetry!

IV

"How beautiful this night! the balmiest sigh,
Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear,
Were discord to the speaking quietude
That wraps this moveless scene. Heaven's ebon vault,
Studded with stars unutterably bright,
Through which the moon's unclouded grandeur rolls,
Seems like a canopy which love had spread
To curtain her sleeping world. Yon gentle hills,
Robed in a garment of untrodden snow;
Yon darksome rocks, whence icicles depend
So stainless that their white and glittering spires
Tinge not the moon's pure beam; yon castled steep
Whose banner hangeth o'er the time-worn tower
So idly that rapt fancy deemeth it
A metaphor of peace; — all form a scene
Where musing solitude might love to lift
Her soul above this sphere of earthliness;
Where silence undisturbed might watch alone —
So cold, so bright, so still.

The orb of day
In southern climes o'er ocean's waveless field
Sinks sweetly smiling; not the faintest breath
Steals o'er the unruffled deep; the clouds of eve
Reflect unmoved the lingering beam of day;
And Vesper's image on the western main
Is beautifully still. To-morrow comes:
Cloud upon cloud, in dark and deepening mass,

7 *has*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

Roll o'er the blackened waters ; the deep roar
Of distant thunder mutters awfully ;
Tempest unfolds its pinion o'er the gloom
That shrouds the boiling surge ; the pitiless fiend,
With all his winds and lightnings, tracks his prey ;
The torn deep yawns, — the vessel finds a grave
Beneath its jagged gulf.

Ah ! whence yon glare
That fires the arch of heaven ? that dark red smoke
Blotting the silver moon ? The stars are quenched
In darkness, and the pure and spangling snow
Gleams faintly through the gloom that gathers round.
Hark to that roar whose swift and deafening peals
In countless echoes through the mountains ring,
Startling pale Midnight on her starry throne !
Now swells the intermingling din ; the jar
Frequent and frightful of the bursting bomb ;
The falling beam, the shriek, the groan, the shout,
The ceaseless clangor, and the rush of men
Inebriate with rage : — loud and more loud
The discord grows ; till pale Death shuts the scene
And o'er the conqueror and the conquered draws
His cold and bloody shroud. — Of all the men
Whom day's departing beam saw blooming there
In proud and vigorous health ; of all the hearts
That beat with anxious life at sunset there ;
How few survive, how few are beating now !
All is deep silence, like the fearful calm
That slumbers in the storm's portentous pause ;
Save when the frantic wail of widowed love

Comes shuddering on the blast, or the faint moan
With which some soul bursts from the frame of clay
Wrapt round its struggling powers.

The gray morn
Dawns on the mournful scene; the sulphurous smoke
Before the icy wind slow rolls away,
And the bright beams of frosty morning dance
Along the spangling snow. There tracks of blood
Even to the forest's depth, and scattered arms,
And lifeless warriors, whose hard lineaments
Death's self could change not, mark the dreadful path
Of the outsallying victors; far behind
Black ashes note where their proud city stood.
Within yon forest is a gloomy glen —
Each tree which guards its darkness from the day,
Waves o'er a warrior's tomb.

I see thee shrink,
Surpassing Spirit! — wert thou human else?
I see a shade of doubt and horror fleet
Across thy stainless features; yet fear not;
This is no unconnected misery,
Nor stands uncaused and irretrievable.
Man's evil nature, that apology
Which kings who rule, and cowards who crouch, set up
For their unnumbered crimes, sheds not the blood
Which desolates the discord-wasted land.
From kings and priests and statesmen war arose,
Whose safety is man's deep unbettered woe,

Whose grandeur his debasement. Let the axe
Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall;
And where its venomed exhalations spread
Ruin, and death, and woe, where millions lay
Quenching the serpent's famine, and their bones
Bleaching unburied in the putrid blast,
A garden shall arise, in loveliness
Surpassing fabled Eden.

Hath Nature's soul, —
That formed this world so beautiful, that spread
Earth's lap with plenty, and life's smallest chord
Strung to unchanging unison, that gave
The happy birds their dwelling in the grove,
That yielded to the wanderers of the deep
The lovely silence of the unfathomed main,
And filled the meanest worm that crawls in dust
With spirit, thought and love, — on Man alone,
Partial in causeless malice, wantonly
Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery; his soul
Blasted with withering curses; placed afar
The meteor-happiness, that shuns his grasp,
But serving on the frightful gulf to glare
Rent wide beneath his footsteps?

Nature! — no!
Kings, priests and statesmen blast the human flower
Even in its tender bud; their influence darts
Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins
Of desolate society. The child,
Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred name,
Swells with the unnatural pride of crime, and lifts

His baby-sword even in a hero's mood.
This infant arm becomes the bloodiest scourge
Of devastated earth; whilst specious names,
Learnt in soft childhood's unsuspecting hour,
Serve as the sophisms with which manhood dims
Bright reason's ray and sanctifies the sword
Upraised to shed a brother's innocent blood.
Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim that man
Inherits vice and misery, when force
And falsehood hang even o'er the cradled babe,
Stifling with rudest grasp all natural good.

"Ah! to the stranger-soul, when first it peeps
From its new tenement and looks abroad
For happiness and sympathy, how stern
And desolate a tract is this wide world!
How withered all the buds of natural good!
No shade, no shelter from the sweeping storms
Of pitiless power! On its wretched frame,
Poisoned, perchance, by the disease and woe
Heaped on the wretched parent whence it sprung
By morals, law and custom, the pure winds
Of heaven, that renovate the insect tribes,
May breathe not. The untainting light of day
May visit not its longings. It is bound
Ere it has life; yea, all the chains are forged
Long ere its being; all liberty and love
And peace is torn from its defencelessness;
Cursed from its birth, even from its cradle doomed
To abjectness and bondage!

"Throughout this varied and eternal world
Soul is the only element, the block

115 *sanctify*, Rossetti conj.

That for uncounted ages has remained.
The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight
Is active living spirit. Every grain
Is sentient both in unity and part,
And the minutest atom comprehends
A world of loves and hatreds; these beget
Evil and good; hence truth and falsehood spring;
Hence will and thought and action, all the germs
Of pain or pleasure, sympathy or hate,
That variegate the eternal universe.
Soul is not more polluted than the beams
Of heaven's pure orb ere round their rapid lines
The taint of earth-born atmospheres arise.

"Man is of soul and body, formed for deeds
Of high resolve; on fancy's boldest wing
To soar unwearied, fearlessly to turn
The keenest pangs to peacefulness, and taste
The joys which mingled sense and spirit yield;
Or he is formed for abjectness and woe,
To grovel on the dunghill of his fears,
To shrink at every sound, to quench the flame
Of natural love in sensualism, to know
That hour as blest when on his worthless days
The frozen hand of death shall set its seal,
Yet fear the cure, though hating the disease.
The one is man that shall hereafter be;
The other, man as vice has made him now.

"War is the statesman's game, the priest's delight,
The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin's trade,
And to those royal murderers whose mean thrones

Are bought by crimes of treachery and gore,
The bread they eat, the staff on which they lean.
Guards, garbed in blood-red livery, surround
Their palaces, participate the crimes
That force defends and from a nation's rage
Secures the crown, which all the curses reach
That famine, frenzy, woe and penury breathe.
These are the hired bravos who defend
The tyrant's throne — the bullies of his fear;
These are the sinks and channels of worst vice,
The refuse of society, the dregs
Of all that is most vile; their cold hearts blend
Deceit with sternness, ignorance with pride,
All that is mean and villainous with rage
Which hopelessness of good and self-contempt
Alone might kindle; they are decked in wealth,
Honor and power, then are sent abroad
To do their work. The pestilence that stalks
In gloomy triumph through some eastern land
Is less destroying. They cajole with gold
And promises of fame the thoughtless youth
Already crushed with servitude; he knows
His wretchedness too late, and cherishes
Repentance for his ruin, when his doom
Is sealed in gold and blood!
Those too the tyrant serve, who, skilled to snare
The feet of justice in the toils of law,
Stand ready to oppress the weaker still,
And right or wrong will vindicate for gold,
Sneering at public virtue, which beneath
Their pitiless tread lies torn and trampled where
Honor sits smiling at the sale of truth.

176 *Secure*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

"Then grave and hoary-headed hypocrites,
Without a hope, a passion or a love,
Who through a life of luxury and lies
Have crept by flattery to the seats of power,
Support the system whence their honors flow.
They have three words — well tyrants know their use,
Well pay them for the loan with usury
Torn from a bleeding world! — God, Hell and Heaven:
A vengeful, pitiless, and almighty fiend,
Whose mercy is a nickname for the rage
Of tameless tigers hungering for blood;
Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,
Where poisonous and undying worms prolong
Eternal misery to those hapless slaves
Whose life has been a penance for its crimes;
And Heaven, a meed for those who dare belie
Their human nature, quake, believe and cringe
Before the mockeries of earthly power.

"These tools the tyrant tempers to his work,
Wields in his wrath, and as he wills destroys,
Omnipotent in wickedness; the while
Youth springs, age moulders, manhood tamely does
His bidding, bribed by short-lived joys to lend
Force to the weakness of his trembling arm.
They rise, they fall; one generation comes
Yielding its harvest to destruction's scythe.
It fades, another blossoms; yet behold!
Red glows the tyrant's stamp-mark on its bloom,
Withering and cankering deep its passive prime.
He has invented lying words and modes,

Empty and vain as his own coreless heart;
Evasive meanings, nothings of much sound,
To lure the heedless victim to the toils
Spread round the valley of its paradise.

"Look to thyself, priest, conqueror or prince!
Whether thy trade is falsehood, and thy lusts
Deep wallow in the earnings of the poor,
With whom thy master was; or thou delight'st
In numbering o'er the myriads of thy slain,
All misery weighing nothing in the scale
Against thy short-lived fame; or thou dost load
With cowardice and crime the groaning land,
A pomp-fed king. Look to thy wretched self!
Ay, art thou not the veriest slave that e'er
Crawled on the loathing earth? Are not thy days
Days of unsatisfying listlessness?
Dost thou not cry, ere night's long rack is o'er,
'When will the morning come?' Is not thy youth
A vain and feverish dream of sensualism?
Thy manhood blighted with unripe disease?
Are not thy views of unregretted death
Drear, comfortless and horrible? Thy mind,
Is it not morbid as thy nerveless frame,
Incapable of judgment, hope or love?
And dost thou wish the errors to survive,
That bar thee from all sympathies of good,
After the miserable interest
Thou hold'st in their protraction? When the grave
Has swallowed up thy memory and thyself,
Dost thou desire the bane that poisons earth
To twine its roots around thy coffined clay,

Spring from thy bones, and blossom on thy tomb,
That of its fruit thy babes may eat and die?

V

"Thus do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave and issue from the womb,
Surviving still the imperishable change
That renovates the world; even as the leaves
Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year
Has scattered on the forest-soil and heaped
For many seasons there — though long they choke,
Loading with loathsome rottenness the land,
All germs of promise, yet when the tall trees
From which they fell, shorn of their lovely shapes,
Lie level with the earth to moulder there,
They fertilize the land they long deformed;
Till from the breathing lawn a forest springs
Of youth, integrity and loveliness,
Like that which gave it life, to spring and die.
Thus suicidal selfishness, that blights
The fairest feelings of the opening heart,
Is destined to decay, whilst from the soil
Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all love,
And judgment cease to wage unnatural war
With passion's unsubduable array.
Twin-sister of Religion, Selfishness!
Rival in crime and falsehood, aping all
The wanton horrors of her bloody play;
Yet frozen, unimpassioned, spiritless,
Shunning the light, and owning not its name,
Compelled by its deformity to screen
With flimsy veil of justice and of right

9 *promise, yet,* Rossetti. ‖ *promise. Yet,* Shelley, 1813.

Its unattractive lineaments that scare
All save the brood of ignorance ; at once
The cause and the effect of tyranny ;
Unblushing, hardened, sensual and vile ;
Dead to all love but of its abjectness ;
With heart impassive by more noble powers
Than unshared pleasure, sordid gain, or fame ;
Despising its own miserable being,
Which still it longs, yet fears, to disenthrall.

" Hence commerce springs, the venal interchange
Of all that human art or Nature yield ;
Which wealth should purchase not, but want demand,
And natural kindness hasten to supply
From the full fountain of its boundless love,
Forever stifled, drained and tainted now.
Commerce ! beneath whose poison-breathing shade
No solitary virtue dares to spring,
But poverty and wealth with equal hand
Scatter their withering curses, and unfold
The doors of premature and violent death
To pining famine and full-fed disease,
To all that shares the lot of human life,
Which, poisoned body and soul, scarce drags the chain
That lengthens as it goes and clanks behind.

" Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,
The signet of its all-enslaving power,
Upon a shining ore, and called it gold ;
Before whose image bow the vulgar great,
The vainly rich, the miserable proud,

The mob of peasants, nobles, priests and kings,
And with blind feelings reverence the power
That grinds them to the dust of misery.
But in the temple of their hireling hearts
Gold is a living god and rules in scorn
All earthly things but virtue.

"Since tyrants by the sale of human life
Heap luxuries to their sensualism, and fame
To their wide-wasting and insatiate pride,
Success has sanctioned to a credulous world
The ruin, the disgrace, the woe of war.
His hosts of blind and unresisting dupes
The despot numbers; from his cabinet
These puppets of his schemes he moves at will,
Even as the slaves by force or famine driven,
Beneath a vulgar master, to perform
A task of cold and brutal drudgery; —
Hardened to hope, insensible to fear,
Scarce living pulleys of a dead machine,
Mere wheels of work and articles of trade,
That grace the proud and noisy pomp of wealth!

"The harmony and happiness of man
Yields to the wealth of nations; that which lifts
His nature to the heaven of its pride,
Is bartered for the poison of his soul;
The weight that drags to earth his towering hopes,
Blighting all prospect but of selfish gain,
Withering all passion but of slavish fear,
Extinguishing all free and generous love

80 *Yield*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

Of enterprise and daring, even the pulse
That fancy kindles in the beating heart
To mingle with sensation, it destroys, —
Leaves nothing but the sordid lust of self,
The grovelling hope of interest and gold,
Unqualified, unmingled, unredeemed
Even by hypocrisy.

And statesmen boast
Of wealth! The wordy eloquence that lives
After the ruin of their hearts, can gild
The bitter poison of a nation's woe;
Can turn the worship of the servile mob
To their corrupt and glaring idol, fame,
From virtue, trampled by its iron tread, —
Although its dazzling pedestal be raised
Amid the horrors of a limb-strewn field,
With desolated dwellings smoking round.
The man of ease, who, by his warm fireside,
To deeds of charitable intercourse
And bare fulfilment of the common laws
Of decency and prejudice confines
The struggling nature of his human heart,
Is duped by their cold sophistry; he sheds
A passing tear perchance upon the wreck
Of earthly peace, when near his dwelling's door
The frightful waves are driven, — when his son
Is murdered by the tyrant, or religion
Drives his wife raving mad. But the poor man
Whose life is misery, and fear and care;
Whom the morn wakens but to fruitless toil;
Who ever hears his famished offspring's scream;
Whom their pale mother's uncomplaining gaze

Forever meets, and the proud rich man's eye
Flashing command, and the heart-breaking scene
Of thousands like himself; — he little heeds
The rhetoric of tyranny; his hate
Is quenchless as his wrongs; he laughs to scorn
The vain and bitter mockery of words,
Feeling the horror of the tyrant's deeds,
And unrestrained but by the arm of power,
That knows and dreads his enmity.

" The iron rod of penury still compels
Her wretched slave to bow the knee to wealth,
And poison, with unprofitable toil,
A life too void of solace to confirm
The very chains that bind him to his doom.
Nature, impartial in munificence,
Has gifted man with all-subduing will.
Matter, with all its transitory shapes,
Lies subjected and plastic at his feet,
That, weak from bondage, tremble as they tread.
How many a rustic Milton has passed by,
Stifling the speechless longings of his heart,
In unremitting drudgery and care!
How many a vulgar Cato has compelled
His energies, no longer tameless then,
To mould a pin or fabricate a nail!
How many a Newton, to whose passive ken
Those mighty spheres that gem infinity
Were only specks of tinsel fixed in heaven
To light the midnights of his native town!

" Yet every heart contains perfection's germ.
The wisest of the sages of the earth.

That ever from the stores of reason drew
Science and truth, and virtue's dreadless tone,
Were but a weak and inexperienced boy,
Proud, sensual, unimpassioned, unimbued
With pure desire and universal love,
Compared to that high being, of cloudless brain,
Untainted passion, elevated will,
Which death (who even would linger long in awe
Within his noble presence and beneath
His changeless eye-beam) might alone subdue.
Him, every slave now dragging through the filth
Of some corrupted city his sad life,
Pining with famine, swoln with luxury,
Blunting the keenness of his spiritual sense
With narrow schemings and unworthy cares,
Or madly rushing through all violent crime
To move the deep stagnation of his soul, —
Might imitate and equal.

But mean lust
Has bound its chains so tight about the earth
That all within it but the virtuous man
Is venal; gold or fame will surely reach
The price prefixed by Selfishness to all
But him of resolute and unchanging will;
Whom nor the plaudits of a servile crowd,
Nor the vile joys of tainting luxury,
Can bribe to yield his elevated soul
To Tyranny or Falsehood, though they wield
With blood-red hand the sceptre of the world.

" All things are sold: the very light of heaven
Is venal; earth's unsparing gifts of love,

The smallest and most despicable things
That lurk in the abysses of the deep,
All objects of our life, even life itself,
And the poor pittance which the laws allow
Of liberty, the fellowship of man,
Those duties which his heart of human love
Should urge him to perform instinctively,
Are bought and sold as in a public mart
Of undisguising Selfishness, that sets
On each its price, the stamp-mark of her reign.
Even love is sold; the solace of all woe
Is turned to deadliest agony, old age
Shivers in selfish beauty's loathing arms,
And youth's corrupted impulses prepare
A life of horror from the blighting bane
Of commerce; whilst the pestilence that springs
From unenjoying sensualism, has filled
All human life with hydra-headed woes.

"Falsehood demands but gold to pay the pangs
Of outraged conscience; for the slavish priest
Sets no great value on his hireling faith;
A little passing pomp, some servile souls,
Whom cowardice itself might safely chain
Or the spare mite of avarice could bribe
To deck the triumph of their languid zeal,
Can make him minister to tyranny.
More daring crime requires a loftier meed.
Without a shudder the slave-soldier lends
His arm to murderous deeds, and steels his heart,
When the dread eloquence of dying men,
Low mingling on the lonely field of fame,
Assails that nature whose applause he sells
For the gross blessings of the patriot mob,

For the vile gratitude of heartless kings,
And for a cold world's good word, — viler still!

There is a nobler glory which survives
Until our being fades, and, solacing
All human care, accompanies its change;
Deserts not virtue in the dungeon's gloom,
And in the precincts of the palace guides
Its footsteps through that labyrinth of crime;
Imbues his lineaments with dauntlessness,
Even when from power's avenging hand he takes
Its sweetest, last and noblest title — death;
— The consciousness of good, which neither gold,
Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heavenly bliss,
Can purchase; but a life of resolute good,
Unalterable will, quenchless desire
Of universal happiness, the heart
That beats with it in unison, the brain
Whose ever-wakeful wisdom toils to change
Reason's rich stores for its eternal weal.

"This commerce of sincerest virtue needs
No meditative signs of selfishness,
No jealous intercourse of wretched gain,
No balancings of prudence, cold and long;
In just and equal measure all is weighed,
One scale contains the sum of human weal,
And one, the good man's heart.

How vainly seek
The selfish for that happiness denied
To aught but virtue! Blind and hardened, they,
Who hope for peace amid the storms of care,

219 *Its* || *His*, Rossetti.

Who covet power they know not how to use,
And sigh for pleasure they refuse to give, —
Madly they frustrate still their own designs ;
And, where they hope that quiet to enjoy
Which virtue pictures, bitterness of soul,
Pining regrets, and vain repentances,
Disease, disgust and lassitude pervade
Their valueless and miserable lives.

" But hoary-headed selfishness has felt
Its death-blow and is tottering to the grave ;
A brighter morn awaits the human day,
When every transfer of earth's natural gifts
Shall be a commerce of good words and works ;
When poverty and wealth, the thirst of fame,
The fear of infamy, disease and woe,
War with its million horrors, and fierce hell,
Shall live but in the memory of time,
Who, like a penitent libertine, shall start,
Look back, and shudder at his younger years."

VI

All touch, all eye, all ear,
The Spirit felt the Fairy's burning speech.
O'er the thin texture of its frame
The varying periods painted changing glows,
As on a summer even,
When soul-enfolding music floats around,
The stainless mirror of the lake
Re-images the eastern gloom,
Mingling convulsively its purple hues
With sunset's burnished gold.

Then thus the Spirit spoke:
"It is a wild and miserable world!
Thorny, and full of care,
Which every fiend can make his prey at will!
O Fairy! in the lapse of years,
Is there no hope in store?
Will yon vast suns roll on
Interminably, still illuming
The night of so many wretched souls,
And see no hope for them?
Will not the universal Spirit e'er
Revivify this withered limb of Heaven?"

The Fairy calmly smiled
In comfort, and a kindling gleam of hope
Suffused the Spirit's lineaments.
"Oh! rest thee tranquil; chase those fearful doubts
Which ne'er could rack an everlasting soul
That sees the chains which bind it to its doom.
Yes! crime and misery are in yonder earth,
Falsehood, mistake and lust;
But the eternal world
Contains at once the evil and the cure.
Some eminent in virtue shall start up,
Even in perversest time;
The truths of their pure lips, that never die,
Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with a wreath
Of ever-living flame,
Until the monster sting itself to death.

"How sweet a scene will earth become!
Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place,

Symphonious with the planetary spheres;
When man, with changeless Nature coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration's work,
When its ungenial poles no longer point
To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there!

"Spirit, on yonder earth,
Falsehood now triumphs; deadly power
Has fixed its seal upon the lip of truth!
Madness and misery are there!
The happiest is most wretched! Yet confide
Until pure health-drops from the cup of joy
Fall like a dew of balm upon the world.
Now, to the scene I show, in silence turn,
And read the blood-stained charter of all woe,
Which Nature soon with recreating hand
Will blot in mercy from the book of earth.
How bold the flight of passion's wandering wing,
How swift the step of reason's firmer tread,
How calm and sweet the victories of life,
How terrorless the triumph of the grave!
How powerless were the mightiest monarch's arm,
Vain his loud threat, and impotent his frown!
How ludicrous the priest's dogmatic roar!
The weight of his exterminating curse
How light! and his affected charity,
To suit the pressure of the changing times,
What palpable deceit! — but for thy aid,
Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend,
Who peoplest earth with demons, hell with men,
And heaven with slaves!

"Thou taintest all thou lookest upon! — the stars,
Which on thy cradle beamed so brightly sweet,
Were gods to the distempered playfulness
Of thy untutored infancy; the trees,
The grass, the clouds, the mountains and the sea,
All living things that walk, swim, creep or fly,
Were gods; the sun had homage, and the moon
Her worshipper. Then thou becamest, a boy,
More daring in thy frenzies; every shape,
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,
Which from sensation's relics fancy culls;
The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,
The genii of the elements, the powers
That give a shape to Nature's varied works,
Had life and place in the corrupt belief
Of thy blind heart; yet still thy youthful hands
Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave
Its strength and ardor to thy frenzied brain;
Thine eager gaze scanned the stupendous scene,
Whose wonders mocked the knowledge of thy pride;
Their everlasting and unchanging laws
Reproached thine ignorance. Awhile thou stood'st
Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst sum up
The elements of all that thou didst know;
The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign,
The budding of the heaven-breathing trees,
The eternal orbs that beautify the night,
The sunrise, and the setting of the moon,
Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,
And all their causes, to an abstract point
Converging thou didst bend, and called it God!
The self-sufficing, the omnipotent,

102 *call*, Rossetti.

The merciful, and the avenging God!
Who, prototype of human misrule, sits
High in heaven's realm, upon a golden throne,
Even like an earthly king; and whose dread work,
Hell, gapes forever for the unhappy slaves
Of fate, whom he created in his sport
To triumph in their torments when they fell!
Earth heard the name; earth trembled as the smoke
Of his revenge ascended up to heaven,
Blotting the constellations; and the cries
Of millions butchered in sweet confidence
And unsuspecting peace, even when the bonds
Of safety were confirmed by wordy oaths
Sworn in his dreadful name, rung through the land;
Whilst innocent babes writhed on thy stubborn spear,
And thou didst laugh to hear the mother's shriek
Of maniac gladness, as the sacred steel
Felt cold in her torn entrails!

"Religion! thou wert then in manhood's prime;
But age crept on; one God would not suffice
For senile puerility; thou framedst
A tale to suit thy dotage and to glut
Thy misery-thirsting soul, that the mad fiend
Thy wickedness had pictured might afford
A plea for sating the unnatural thirst
For murder, rapine, violence and crime,
That still consumed thy being, even when
Thou heard'st the step of fate; that flames might light
Thy funeral scene; and the shrill horrent shrieks

Of parents dying on the pile that burned
To light their children to thy paths, the roar
Of the encircling flames, the exulting cries
Of thine apostles loud commingling there,
Might sate thine hungry ear
Even on the bed of death!

"But now contempt is mocking thy gray hairs;
Thou art descending to the darksome grave,
Unhonored and unpitied but by those
Whose pride is passing by like thine, and sheds,
Like thine, a glare that fades before the sun
Of truth, and shines but in the dreadful night
That long has lowered above the ruined world.

"Throughout these infinite orbs of mingling light
Of which yon earth is one, is wide diffused
A Spirit of activity and life,
That knows no term, cessation or decay;
That fades not when the lamp of earthly life,
Extinguished in the dampness of the grave,
Awhile there slumbers, more than when the babe
In the dim newness of its being feels
The impulses of sublunary things,
And all is wonder to unpractised sense;
But, active, steadfast and eternal, still
Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the tempest roars,
Cheers in the day, breathes in the balmy groves,
Strengthens in health, and poisons in disease;
And in the storm of change, that ceaselessly
Rolls round the eternal universe and shakes
Its undecaying battlement, presides,

Apportioning with irresistible law
The place each spring of its machine shall fill;
So that, when waves on waves tumultuous heap
Confusion to the clouds, and fiercely driven
Heaven's lightnings scorch the uprooted ocean-
fords —
Whilst, to the eye of shipwrecked mariner,
Lone sitting on the bare and shuddering rock,
All seems unlinked contingency and chance —
No atom of this turbulence fulfils
A vague and unnecessitated task
Or acts but as it must and ought to act.
Even the minutest molecule of light,
That in an April sunbeam's fleeting glow
Fulfils its destined though invisible work,
The universal Spirit guides; nor less
When merciless ambition, or mad zeal,
Has led two hosts of dupes to battle-field,
That, blind, they there may dig each other's graves
And call the sad work glory, does it rule
All passions; not a thought, a will, an act,
No working of the tyrant's moody mind,
Nor one misgiving of the slaves who boast
Their servitude to hide the shame they feel,
Nor the events enchaining every will,
That from the depths of unrecorded time
Have drawn all-influencing virtue, pass
Unrecognized or unforeseen by thee,
Soul of the Universe! eternal spring
Of life and death, of happiness and woe,
Of all that chequers the phantasmal scene
That floats before our eyes in wavering light,
Which gleams but on the darkness of our prison

Whose chains and massy walls
We feel but cannot see.

"Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing Power,
Necessity! thou mother of the world!
Unlike the God of human error, thou
Requirest no prayers or praises; the caprice
Of man's weak will belongs no more to thee
Than do the changeful passions of his breast
To thy unvarying harmony; the slave,
Whose horrible lusts spread misery o'er the world,
And the good man, who lifts with virtuous pride
His being in the sight of happiness
That springs from his own works; the poison-tree,
Beneath whose shade all life is withered up,
And the fair oak, whose leafy dome affords
A temple where the vows of happy love
Are registered, are equal in thy sight;
No love, no hate thou cherishest; revenge
And favoritism, and worst desire of fame
Thou knowest not; all that the wide world contains
Are but thy passive instruments, and thou
Regard'st them all with an impartial eye,
Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot feel,
Because thou hast not human sense,
Because thou art not human mind.

"Yes! when the sweeping storm of time
Has sung its death-dirge o'er the ruined fanes
And broken altars of the almighty fiend,
Whose name usurps thy honors, and the blood
Through centuries clotted there has floated down

The tainted flood of ages, shalt thou live
Unchangeable! A shrine is raised to thee,
  Which nor the tempest breath of time,
  Nor the interminable flood
  Over earth's slight pageant rolling,
    Availeth to destroy, —
The sensitive extension of the world;
  That wondrous and eternal fane,
Where pain and pleasure, good and evil join,
To do the will of strong necessity,
  And life, in multitudinous shapes,
Still pressing forward where no term can be,
  Like hungry and unresting flame
Curls round the eternal columns of its strength."

VII

SPIRIT

"I was an infant when my mother went
To see an atheist burned. She took me there.
The dark-robed priests were met around the pile;
The multitude was gazing silently;
And as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,
Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,
Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth;
The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs;
His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon;
His death-pang rent my heart! the insensate mob
Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.
'Weep not, child!' cried my mother, 'for that
    man
Has said, There is no God.'"

FAIRY

"There is no God!
Nature confirms the faith his death-groan sealed.
Let heaven and earth, let man's revolving race,
His ceaseless generations, tell their tale;
Let every part depending on the chain
That links it to the whole, point to the hand
That grasps its term! Let every seed that falls
In silent eloquence unfold its store
Of argument; infinity within,
Infinity without, belie creation;
The exterminable spirit it contains
Is Nature's only God; but human pride
Is skilful to invent most serious names
To hide its ignorance.

The name of God
Has fenced about all crime with holiness,
Himself the creature of his worshippers,
Whose names and attributes and passions change,
Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or Lord,
Even with the human dupes who build his shrines,
Still serving o'er the war-polluted world
For desolation's watchword; whether hosts
Stain his death-blushing chariot-wheels, as on
Triumphantly they roll, whilst Brahmins raise
A sacred hymn to mingle with the groans;
Or countless partners of his power divide
His tyranny to weakness; or the smoke
Of burning towns, the cries of female helplessness,
Unarmed old age, and youth, and infancy,
Horribly massacred, ascend to heaven

23 *interminable, inexterminable,* Rossetti conj.

In honor of his name ; or, last and worst,
Earth groans beneath religion's iron age,
And priests dare babble of a God of peace,
Even whilst their hands are red with guiltless
blood,
Murdering the while, uprooting every germ
Of truth, exterminating, spoiling all,
Making the earth a slaughter-house !

"O Spirit ! through the sense
By which thy inner nature was apprised
Of outward shows, vague dreams have rolled,
And varied reminiscences have waked
Tablets that never fade ;
All things have been imprinted there,
The stars, the sea, the earth, the sky,
Even the unshapeliest lineaments
Of wild and fleeting visions
Have left a record there
To testify of earth.

" These are my empire, for to me is given
The wonders of the human world to keep,
And fancy's thin creations to endow
With manner, being and reality ;
Therefore a wondrous phantom from the dreams
Of human error's dense and purblind faith
I will evoke, to meet thy questioning.
Ahasuerus, rise ! "

A strange and woe-worn wight
Arose beside the battlement,
And stood unmoving there.

His inessential figure cast no shade
Upon the golden floor;
His port and mien bore mark of many years,
And chronicles of untold ancientness
Were legible within his beamless eye;
Yet his cheek bore the mark of youth;
Freshness and vigor knit his manly frame;
The wisdom of old age was mingled there
With youth's primeval dauntlessness;
And inexpressible woe,
Chastened by fearless resignation, gave
An awful grace to his all-speaking brow.

SPIRIT

"Is there a God?"

AHASUERUS

"Is there a God! — ay, an almighty God,
And vengeful as almighty! Once his voice
Was heard on earth; earth shuddered at the sound;
The fiery-visaged firmament expressed
Abhorrence, and the grave of Nature yawned
To swallow all the dauntless and the good
That dared to hurl defiance at his throne,
Girt as it was with power. None but slaves
Survived, — cold-blooded slaves, who did the work
Of tyrannous omnipotence; whose souls
No honest indignation ever urged
To elevated daring, to one deed
Which gross and sensual self did not pollute.
These slaves built temples for the omnipotent fiend,
Gorgeous and vast; the costly altars smoked

With human blood, and hideous pæans rung
Through all the long-drawn aisles. A murderer heard
His voice in Egypt, one whose gifts and arts
Had raised him to his eminence in power,
Accomplice of omnipotence in crime
And confidant of the all-knowing one.
These were Jehovah's words.

'From an eternity of idleness
I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil made earth
From nothing; rested, and created man;
I placed him in a paradise, and there
Planted the tree of evil, so that he
Might eat and perish, and my soul procure
Wherewith to sate its malice and to turn,
Even like a heartless conqueror of the earth,
All misery to my fame. The race of men,
Chosen to my honor, with impunity
May sate the lusts I planted in their heart.
Here I command thee hence to lead them on,
Until with hardened feet their conquering troops
Wade on the promised soil through woman's blood,
And make my name be dreaded through the land.
Yet ever-burning flame and ceaseless woe
Shall be the doom of their eternal souls,
With every soul on this ungrateful earth,
Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong, — even all
Shall perish, to fulfil the blind revenge
(Which you, to men, call justice) of their God.'

The murderer's brow
Quivered with horror.

'God omnipotent,
Is there no mercy? must our punishment
Be endless? will long ages roll away,
And see no term? Oh! wherefore hast thou made
In mockery and wrath this evil earth?
Mercy becomes the powerful — be but just!
O God! repent and save!'

'One way remains:
I will beget a son and he shall bear
The sins of all the world; he shall arise
In an unnoticed corner of the earth,
And there shall die upon a cross, and purge
The universal crime; so that the few
On whom my grace descends, those who are marked
As vessels to the honor of their God,
May credit this strange sacrifice and save
Their souls alive. Millions shall live and die,
Who ne'er shall call upon their Saviour's name,
But, unredeemed, go to the gaping grave,
Thousands shall deem it an old woman's tale,
Such as the nurses frighten babes withal;
These in a gulf of anguish and of flame
Shall curse their reprobation endlessly,
Yet tenfold pangs shall force them to avow,
Even on their beds of torment where they howl,
My honor and the justice of their doom.
What then avail their virtuous deeds, their thoughts
Of purity, with radiant genius bright
Or lit with human reason's earthly ray?
Many are called, but few will I elect.
Do thou my bidding, Moses!'

Even the murderer's cheek
Was blanched with horror, and his quivering lips
Scarce faintly uttered — 'O almighty one,
I tremble and obey!'

"O Spirit! centuries have set their seal
On this heart of many wounds, and loaded brain,
Since the Incarnate came; humbly he came,
Veiling his horrible Godhead in the shape
Of man, scorned by the world, his name unheard
Save by the rabble of his native town,
Even as a parish demagogue. He led
The crowd; he taught them justice, truth and peace,
In semblance; but he lit within their souls
The quenchless flames of zeal, and blessed the sword
He brought on earth to satiate with the blood
Of truth and freedom his malignant soul.
At length his mortal frame was led to death.
I stood beside him; on the torturing cross
No pain assailed his unterrestrial sense;
And yet he groaned. Indignantly I summed
The massacres and miseries which his name
Had sanctioned in my country, and I cried,
'Go! go!' in mockery.
A smile of godlike malice reillumined
His fading lineaments. 'I go,' he cried,
'But thou shalt wander o'er the unquiet earth
Eternally.' The dampness of the grave
Bathed my imperishable front. I fell,
And long lay tranced upon the charmèd soil.

180 *reillumed*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].

When I awoke hell burned within my brain
Which staggered on its seat; for all around
The mouldering relics of my kindred lay,
Even as the Almighty's ire arrested them,
And in their various attitudes of death
My murdered children's mute and eyeless skulls
Glared ghastily upon me.

But my soul,
From sight and sense of the polluting woe
Of tyranny, had long learned to prefer
Hell's freedom to the servitude of heaven.
Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly began
My lonely and unending pilgrimage,
Resolved to wage unweariable war
With my almighty tyrant and to hurl
Defiance at his impotence to harm
Beyond the curse I bore. The very hand,
That barred my passage to the peaceful grave,
Has crushed the earth to misery, and given
Its empire to the chosen of his slaves.
These I have seen, even from the earliest dawn
Of weak, unstable and precarious power,
Then preaching peace, as now they practise war;
So, when they turned but from the massacre
Of unoffending infidels to quench
Their thirst for ruin in the very blood
That flowed in their own veins, and pitiless zeal
Froze every human feeling as the wife
Sheathed in her husband's heart the sacred steel,
Even whilst its hopes were dreaming of her love;

192 *ghastly*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].
208 *So* || *To*, Rossetti conj.

And friends to friends, brothers to brothers stood
Opposed in bloodiest battle-field, and war,
Scarce satiable by fate's last death-draught, waged,
Drunk from the wine-press of the Almighty's wrath;
Whilst the red cross, in mockery of peace,
Pointed to victory! When the fray was done,
No remnant of the exterminated faith
Survived to tell its ruin, but the flesh,
With putrid smoke poisoning the atmosphere,
That rotted on the half-extinguished pile.

"Yes! I have seen God's worshippers unsheathe
The sword of his revenge, when grace descended,
Confirming all unnatural impulses,
To sanctify their desolating deeds;
And frantic priests waved the ill-omened cross
O'er the unhappy earth; then shone the sun
On showers of gore from the upflashing steel
Of safe assassination, and all crime
Made stingless by the spirits of the Lord,
And blood-red rainbows canopied the land.

"Spirit! no year of my eventful being
Has passed unstained by crime and misery,
Which flows from God's own faith. I've marked his slaves
With tongues, whose lies are venomous, beguile
The insensate mob, and, whilst one hand was red
With murder, feign to stretch the other out
For brotherhood and peace; and that they now
Babble of love and mercy, whilst their deeds

235 *Spirit*, Rossetti.

Are marked with all the narrowness and crime
That freedom's young arm dare not yet chastise,
Reason may claim our gratitude, who now,
Establishing the imperishable throne
Of truth and stubborn virtue, maketh vain
The unprevailing malice of my foe,
Whose bootless rage heaps torments for the brave,
Adds impotent eternities to pain,
Whilst keenest disappointment racks his breast
To see the smiles of peace around them play,
To frustrate or to sanctify their doom.

"Thus have I stood, — through a wild waste of
years
Struggling with whirlwinds of mad agony,
Yet peaceful, and serene, and self-enshrined,
Mocking my powerless tyrant's horrible curse
With stubborn and unalterable will,
Even as a giant oak, which heaven's fierce flame
Had scathèd in the wilderness, to stand
A monument of fadeless ruin there;
Yet peacefully and movelessly it braves
The midnight conflict of the wintry storm,
As in the sunlight's calm it spreads
Its worn and withered arms on high
To meet the quiet of a summer's noon."

The Fairy waved her wand;
Ahasuerus fled
Fast as the shapes of mingled shade and mist,
That lurk in the glens of a twilight grove,
Flee from the morning beam; —

244 *dares*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].

The matter of which dreams are made
Not more endowed with actual life
Than this phantasmal portraiture
Of wandering human thought.

VIII

THE FAIRY

"The present and the past thou hast beheld.
It was a desolate sight. Now, Spirit, learn,
The secrets of the future. — Time!
Unfold the brooding pinion of thy gloom,
Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,
And from the cradles of eternity,
Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep
By the deep murmuring stream of passing things,
Tear thou that gloomy shroud. — Spirit, behold
Thy glorious destiny!"

Joy to the Spirit came.
Through the wide rent in Time's eternal veil,
Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear;
Earth was no longer hell;
Love, freedom, health had given
Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime,
And all its pulses beat
Symphonious to the planetary spheres;
Then dulcet music swelled
Concordant with the life-strings of the soul;
It throbbed in sweet and languid beatings there,
Catching new life from transitory death;
Like the vague sighings of a wind at even
That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea

And dies on the creation of its breath,
And sinks and rises, falls and swells by fits,
Was the pure stream of feeling
That sprung from these sweet notes,
And o'er the Spirit's human sympathies
With mild and gentle motion calmly flowed.

Joy to the Spirit came, —
Such joy as when a lover sees
The chosen of his soul in happiness
And witnesses her peace
Whose woe to him were bitterer than death;
Sees her unfaded cheek
Glow mantling in first luxury of health,
Thrills with her lovely eyes,
Which like two stars amid the heaving main
Sparkle through liquid bliss.

Then in her triumph spoke the Fairy Queen:
"I will not call the ghost of ages gone
To unfold the frightful secrets of its lore;
The present now is past,
And those events that desolate the earth
Have faded from the memory of Time,
Who dares not give reality to that
Whose being I annul. To me is given
The wonders of the human world to keep,
Space, matter, time and mind. Futurity
Exposes now its treasure; let the sight
Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.
O human Spirit! spur thee to the goal
Where virtue fixes universal peace,

28 *sprang*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839².

And, 'midst the ebb and flow of human things,
Show somewhat stable, somewhat certain still,
A light-house o'er the wild of dreary waves.

"The habitable earth is full of bliss;
Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled
By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,
Where matter dared not vegetate or live,
But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude
Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed;
And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles
Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls
Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand,
Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet
To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves
And melodize with man's blest nature there.

"Those deserts of immeasurable sand,
Whose age-collected fervors scarce allowed
A bird to live, a blade of grass to spring,
Where the shrill chirp of the green lizard's love
Broke on the sultry silentness alone,
Now teem with countless rills and shady woods,
Cornfields and pastures and white cottages;
And where the startled wilderness beheld
A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood,
A tigress sating with the flesh of lambs
The unnatural famine of her toothless cubs,
Whilst shouts and howlings through the desert rang, —
Sloping and smooth the daisy-spangled lawn,
Offering sweet incense to the sunrise, smiles
To see a babe before his mother's door,

56 *Shows*, Rossetti.

Sharing his morning's meal
With the green and golden basilisk
That comes to lick his feet.

"Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail
Has seen above the illimitable plain
Morning on night and night on morning rise,
Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread
Its shadowy mountains on the sun-bright sea,
Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves
So long have mingled with the gusty wind
In melancholy loneliness, and swept
The desert of those ocean solitudes
But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing shriek,
The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm;
Now to the sweet and many-mingling sounds
Of kindliest human impulses respond.
Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem,
With lightsome clouds and shining seas between,
And fertile valleys, resonant with bliss,
Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave,
Which like a toil-worn laborer leaps to shore
To meet the kisses of the flowrets there.

"All things are recreated, and the flame
Of consentaneous love inspires all life.
The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck
To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,
Rewarding her with their pure perfectness;
The balmy breathings of the wind inhale
Her virtues and diffuse them all abroad;
Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere,
Glows in the fruits and mantles on the stream;
No storms deform the beaming brow of heaven,

Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride
The foliage of the ever-verdant trees;
But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair,
And autumn proudly bears her matron grace,
Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of spring,
Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit
Reflects its tint and blushes into love.

"The lion now forgets to thirst for blood;
There might you see him sporting in the sun
Beside the dreadless kid; his claws are sheathed,
His teeth are harmless, custom's force has made
His nature as the nature of a lamb.
Like passion's fruit, the nightshade's tempting bane
Poisons no more the pleasure it bestows;
All bitterness is past; the cup of joy
Unmingled mantles to the goblet's brim
And courts the thirsty lips it fled before.

"But chief, ambiguous man, he that can know
More misery, and dream more joy than all;
Whose keen sensations thrill within his breast
To mingle with a loftier instinct there,
Lending their power to pleasure and to pain,
Yet raising, sharpening, and refining each;
Who stands amid the ever-varying world,
The burden or the glory of the earth;
He chief perceives the change; his being notes
The gradual renovation and defines
Each movement of its progress on his mind.

"Man, where the gloom of the long polar night
Lowers o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil,

Where scarce the hardiest herb that braves the frost
Basks in the moonlight's ineffectual glow,
Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night;
His chilled and narrow energies, his heart
Insensible to courage, truth or love,
His stunted stature and imbecile frame,
Marked him for some abortion of the earth,
Fit compeer of the bears that roamed around,
Whose habits and enjoyments were his own;
His life a feverish dream of stagnant woe,
Whose meagre wants, but scantily fulfilled,
Apprised him ever of the joyless length
Which his short being's wretchedness had reached;
His death a pang which famine, cold and toil
Long on the mind, whilst yet the vital spark
Clung to the body stubbornly, had brought:
All was inflicted here that earth's revenge
Could wreak on the infringers of her law;
One curse alone was spared — the name of God.

"Nor, where the tropics bound the realms of day
With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,
Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere
Scattered the seeds of pestilence and fed
Unnatural vegetation, where the land
Teemed with all earthquake, tempest and disease,
Was man a nobler being; slavery
Had crushed him to his country's blood-stained dust;
Or he was bartered for the fame of power,
Which, all internal impulses destroying,
Makes human will an article of trade;

Or he was changed with Christians for their gold
And dragged to distant isles, where to the sound
Of the flesh-mangling scourge he does the work
Of all-polluting luxury and wealth,
Which doubly visits on the tyrants' heads
The long-protracted fulness of their woe;
Or he was led to legal butchery,
To turn to worms beneath that burning sun
Where kings first leagued against the rights of men
And priests first traded with the name of God.

"Even where the milder zone afforded man
A seeming shelter, yet contagion there,
Blighting his being with unnumbered ills,
Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth till late
Availed to arrest its progress or create
That peace which first in bloodless victory waved
Her snowy standard o'er this favored clime;
There man was long the train-bearer of slaves,
The mimic of surrounding misery,
The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,
The bloodhound of religion's hungry zeal.

"Here now the human being stands adorning
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind;
Blest from his birth with all bland impulses,
Which gently in his noble bosom wake
All kindly passions and all pure desires.
Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing
Which from the exhaustless store of human weal
Draws on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness gift

182 *their* || *his*, Rossetti.
205 *Dawns*, Shelley, Notes to Queen Mab, 1813.

With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks
The unprevailing hoariness of age;
And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene
Swift as an unremembered vision, stands
Immortal upon earth; no longer now
He slays the lamb that looks him in the face,
And horribly devours his mangled flesh,
Which, still avenging Nature's broken law,
Kindled all putrid humors in his frame,
All evil passions and all vain belief,
Hatred, despair and loathing in his mind,
The germs of misery, death, disease and crime.
No longer now the wingèd habitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,
Flee from the form of man; but gather round,
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands
Which little children stretch in friendly sport
Towards these dreadless partners of their play.
All things are void of terror; man has lost
His terrible prerogative, and stands
An equal amidst equals; happiness
And science dawn, though late, upon the earth;
Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame;
Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,
Reason and passion cease to combat there;
Whilst each unfettered o'er the earth extend
Their all-subduing energies, and wield
The sceptre of a vast dominion there;
Whilst every shape and mode of matter lends
Its force to the omnipotence of mind,
Which from its dark mine drags the gem of truth
To decorate its paradise of peace."

232–233 *extends Its . . . and wields*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

IX

"O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!
To which those restless souls that ceaselessly
Throng through the human universe, aspire!
Thou consummation of all mortal hope!
Thou glorious prize of blindly working will,
Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,
Verge to one point and blend forever there!
Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place
Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,
Languor, disease and ignorance dare not come!
O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

"Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams;
And dim forebodings of thy loveliness,
Haunting the human heart, have there entwined
Those rooted hopes of some sweet place of bliss,
Where friends and lovers meet to part no more.
Thou art the end of all desire and will,
The product of all action; and the souls,
That by the paths of an aspiring change
Have reached thy haven of perpetual peace,
There rest from the eternity of toil
That framed the fabric of thy perfectness.

"Even Time, the conqueror, fled thee in his fear;
That hoary giant, who in lonely pride
So long had ruled the world that nations fell
Beneath his silent footstep. Pyramids,
That for millenniums had withstood the tide

Of human things, his storm-breath drove in sand
Across that desert where their stones survived
The name of him whose pride had heaped them there.
Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,
Was but the mushroom of a summer day,
That his light-wingèd footstep pressed to dust;
Time was the king of earth; all things gave way
Before him but the fixed and virtuous will,
The sacred sympathies of soul and sense,
That mocked his fury and prepared his fall.

"Yet slow and gradual dawned the morn of love;
Long lay the clouds of darkness o'er the scene,
Till from its native heaven they rolled away:
First, crime triumphant o'er all hope careered
Unblushing, undisguising, bold and strong,
Whilst falsehood, tricked in virtue's attributes,
Long sanctified all deeds of vice and woe,
Till, done by her own venomous sting to death,
She left the moral world without a law,
No longer fettering passion's fearless wing,
Nor searing reason with the brand of God.
Then steadily the happy ferment worked;
Reason was free; and wild though passion went
Through tangled glens and wood-embosomed meads,
Gathering a garland of the strangest flowers,
Yet, like the bee returning to her queen,
She bound the sweetest on her sister's brow,
Who meek and sober kissed the sportive child,
No longer trembling at the broken rod.

" Mild was the slow necessity of death.
The tranquil spirit failed beneath its grasp,
Without a groan, almost without a fear,
Calm as a voyager to some distant land,
And full of wonder, full of hope as he.
The deadly germs of languor and disease
Died in the human frame, and purity
Blessed with all gifts her earthly worshippers.
How vigorous then the athletic form of age!
How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!
Where neither avarice, cunning, pride or care
Had stamped the seal of gray deformity
On all the mingling lineaments of time.
How lovely the intrepid front of youth,
Which meek-eyed courage decked with freshest grace;
Courage of soul, that dreaded not a name,
And elevated will, that journeyed on
Through life's phantasmal scene in fearlessness,
With virtue, love and pleasure, hand in hand!

" Then, that sweet bondage which is freedom's self,
And rivets with sensation's softest tie
The kindred sympathies of human souls,
Needed no fetters of tyrannic law.
Those delicate and timid impulses
In Nature's primal modesty arose,
And with undoubting confidence disclosed
The growing longings of its dawning love,
Unchecked by dull and selfish chastity,
That virtue of the cheaply virtuous,
Who pride themselves in senselessness and frost.

67 *nor*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

No longer prostitution's venomed bane
Poisoned the springs of happiness and life;
Woman and man, in confidence and love,
Equal and free and pure together trod
The mountain-paths of virtue, which no more
Were stained with blood from many a pilgrim's
feet.

"Then, where, through distant ages, long in pride
The palace of the monarch-slave had mocked
Famine's faint groan and penury's silent tear,
A heap of crumbling ruins stood, and threw
Year after year their stones upon the field,
Wakening a lonely echo; and the leaves
Of the old thorn, that on the topmost tower
Usurped the royal ensign's grandeur, shook
In the stern storm that swayed the topmost tower,
And whispered strange tales in the whirlwind's ear.

"Low through the lone cathedral's roofless aisles
The melancholy winds a death-dirge sung.
It were a sight of awfulness to see
The works of faith and slavery, so vast,
So sumptuous, yet so perishing withal,
Even as the corpse that rests beneath its wall!
A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death
To-day, the breathing marble glows above
To decorate its memory, and tongues
Are busy of its life; to-morrow, worms
In silence and in darkness seize their prey.

"Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,
Fearless and free the ruddy children played,

Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows
With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,
That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom;
The ponderous chains and gratings of strong iron
There rusted amid heaps of broken stone
That mingled slowly with their native earth;
There the broad beam of day, which feebly once
Lighted the cheek of lean captivity
With a pale and sickly glare, then freely shone
On the pure smiles of infant playfulness;
No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair
Pealed through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes
Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds
And merriment were resonant around.

"These ruins soon left not a wreck behind;
Their elements, wide-scattered o'er the globe,
To happier shapes were moulded, and became
Ministrant to all blissful impulses;
Thus human things were perfected, and earth,
Even as a child beneath its mother's love,
Was strengthened in all excellence, and grew
Fairer and nobler with each passing year.

"Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene
Closes in steadfast darkness, and the past
Fades from our charmèd sight. My task is done;
Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders are thine own
With all the fear and all the hope they bring.
My spells are passed; the present now recurs.

139 *past* || *future*, Rossetti.

Ah me! a pathless wilderness remains
Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.

"Yet, human Spirit! bravely hold thy course;
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change;
For birth and life and death, and that strange state
Before the naked soul has found its home,
All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their way,
Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,
Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal;
For birth but wakes the spirit to the sense
Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape
New modes of passion to its frame may lend;
Life is its state of action, and the store
Of all events is aggregated there
That variegate the eternal universe;
Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,
That leads to azure isles and beaming skies
And happy regions of eternal hope.
Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on.
Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,
Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,
Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth
To feed with kindliest dews its favorite flower,
That blooms in mossy bank and darksome glens,
Lighting the greenwood with its sunny smile.

"Fear not then, Spirit, death's disrobing hand,
So welcome when the tyrant is awake,
So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch burns;
'Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour,

The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep.
Death is no foe to virtue; earth has seen
Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom,
Mingling with freedom's fadeless laurels there,
And presaging the truth of visioned bliss.
Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene
Of linked and gradual being has confirmed?
Whose stingings bade thy heart look further still,
When, to the moonlight walk by Henry led,
Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of death?
And wilt thou rudely tear them from thy breast,
Listening supinely to a bigot's creed,
Or tamely crouching to the tyrant's rod,
Whose iron thongs are red with human gore?
Never: but bravely bearing on, thy will
Is destined an eternal war to wage
With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot
The germs of misery from the human heart.
Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe
The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,
Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,
Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease;
Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy
Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,
When fenced by power and master of the world.
Thou art sincere and good; of resolute mind,
Free from heart-withering custom's cold control,
Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued.
Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee,
And therefore art thou worthy of the boon
Which thou hast now received; virtue shall keep
Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod,

And many days of beaming hope shall bless
Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.
Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy,
  Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
  Light, life and rapture from thy smile!"

  The Fairy waves her wand of charm.
Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car,
  That rolled beside the battlement,
Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness.
  Again the enchanted steeds were yoked;
  Again the burning wheels inflame
The steep descent of heaven's untrodden way.
  Fast and far the chariot flew;
  The vast and fiery globes that rolled
  Around the Fairy's palace-gate
Lessened by slow degrees, and soon appeared
Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs
That there attendant on the solar power
With borrowed light pursued their narrower way.

    Earth floated then below;
  The chariot paused a moment there;
    The Spirit then descended;
The restless coursers pawed the ungenial soil,
Snuffed the gross air, and then, their errand
      done,
Unfurled their pinions to the winds of heaven.

  The Body and the Soul united then.
A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame;
Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained.

She looked around in wonder, and beheld
Henry, who kneeled in silence by her couch,
Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love,
And the bright beaming stars
That through the casement shone.

ALASTOR

OR

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam,
quærebam quid amarem, amans amare.
Confess. St. August.

Alastor was published by Shelley in March, 1816, with other poems, in a thin volume, to which it gave the title, under the imprint of S. Hamilton, Weybridge, Surrey, for Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, London. It was composed during the autumn of 1815, when Shelley was living at Bishopsgate Heath near Windsor Park, and reflects the quiet of his days there, as well as the impressions of nature which he derived from travel, and the mood of expectation of early death which he experienced in the earlier months of that year. The volume, although it had little sale and made no impression except upon Shelley's personal friends, became sufficiently scarce to lead Mrs. Shelley to include a reprint of the poem in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.

PREFACE

THE poem entitled *Alastor* may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous and tranquil and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful or wise or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave.

The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men. The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin. But that Power, which strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction by awakening them to too

exquisite a perception of its influences, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious as their delinquency is more contemptible and pernicious. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country. Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

> "The good die first,
> And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust
> Burn to the socket!"

December 14, 1815.

[The remainder of the Preface published with *Alastor* is printed, in this edition, with *The Dæmon of the World*, which it concerns.]

ALASTOR; OR, THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Earth, Ocean, Air, belovèd brotherhood!
If our great Mother has imbued my soul
With aught of natural piety to feel
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
If Autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
And Winter robing with pure snow and crowns
Of starry ice the gray grass and bare boughs;
If Spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes
Her first sweet kisses, — have been dear to me;
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
I consciously have injured, but still loved
And cherished these my kindred; then forgive
This boast, belovèd brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favor now!

Mother of this unfathomable world!
Favor my solemn song, for I have loved
Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,
And my heart ever gazes on the depth
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed
In charnels and on coffins, where black death
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings

Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,
Thy messenger, to render up the tale
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,
When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,
Like an inspired and desperate alchemist
Staking his very life on some dark hope,
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
With my most innocent love, until strange tears,
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made
Such magic as compels the charmèd night
To render up thy charge; and, though ne'er yet
Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,
Enough from incommunicable dream,
And twilight phantasms, and deep noonday thought,
Has shone within me, that serenely now
And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre
Suspended in the solitary dome
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain
May modulate with murmurs of the air,
And motions of the forests and the sea,
And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb
No human hands with pious reverence reared,
But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds
Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid
Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness:
A lovely youth, — no mourning maiden decked
With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,

The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:
Gentle, and brave, and generous, — no lorn bard
Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:
He lived, he died, he sung in solitude.
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,
And virgins, as unknown he passed, have pined
And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,
And Silence, too enamoured of that voice,
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision and bright silver dream
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. When early youth had passed, he left
His cold fireside and alienated home
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
Has lured his fearless steps; and he has bought
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,
His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps
He like her shadow has pursued, where'er
The red volcano overcanopies
Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes
On black bare pointed islets ever beat

60 *sang*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].
62 *pined* ‖ *sighed*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves,
Rugged and dark, winding among the springs
Of fire and poison, inaccessible
To avarice or pride, their starry domes
Of diamond and of gold expand above
Numberless and immeasurable halls,
Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines
Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.
Nor had that scene of ampler majesty
Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven
And the green earth, lost in his heart its claims
To love and wonder; he would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
Until the doves and squirrels would partake
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
Her timid steps, to gaze upon a form
More graceful than her own.

His wandering step,
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old:
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange,
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk
Or jasper tomb or mutilated sphinx,
Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
Stupendous columns, and wild images

Of more than man, where marble daemons watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,
He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth; through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes; nor, when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,
Her daily portion, from her father's tent,
And spread her matting for his couch, and stole
From duties and repose to tend his steps,
Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe
To speak her love, and watched his nightly sleep,
Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips
Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath
Of innocent dreams arose; then, when red morn
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home
Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.

The Poet, wandering on, through Arabie,
And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
And o'er the aërial mountains which pour down
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
In joy and exultation held his way;

Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veilèd maid
Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held
His inmost sense suspended in its web
Of many-colored woof and shifting hues.
Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,
Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood
Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame
A permeating fire; wild numbers then
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs
Subdued by its own pathos; her fair hands
Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp
Strange symphony, and in their branching veins
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.
The beating of her heart was heard to fill
The pauses of her music, and her breath
Tumultuously accorded with those fits
Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,
As if her heart impatiently endured
Its bursting burden; at the sound he turned,
And saw by the warm light of their own life
Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil

161 *Himself*, Mrs. Shelley, 1847.

Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,
Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,
Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips
Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly.
His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs, and quelled
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
Her panting bosom : — she drew back awhile,
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night
Involved and swallowed up the vision ; sleep,
Like a dark flood suspended in its course,
Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock, he started from his trance —
The cold white light of morning, the blue moon
Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,
The distinct valley and the vacant woods,
Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled
The hues of heaven that canopied his bower
Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,
The mystery and the majesty of Earth,
The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes
Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.
The spirit of sweet human love has sent

181 *sank*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues
Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;
He overleaps the bounds. Alas! alas!
Were limbs and breath and being intertwined
Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, forever lost
In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,
That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of death
Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake
Lead only to a black and watery depth,
While death's blue vault with loathliest vapors hung,
Where every shade which the foul grave exhales
Hides its dead eye from the detested day,
Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?
This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart;
The insatiate hope which it awakened stung
His brain even like despair.

While daylight held
The sky, the Poet kept mute conference
With his still soul. At night the passion came,
Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream,
And shook him from his rest, and led him forth
Into the darkness. As an eagle, grasped
In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast
Burn with the poison, and precipitates
Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud,

219 *Conducts*, Rossetti ‖ *Conduct*, Shelley, 1816.

Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight
O'er the wide aëry wilderness: thus driven
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,
Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,
Startling with careless step the moon-light snake,
He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,
Shedding the mockery of its vital hues
Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on
Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep
Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;
Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind
Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,
Day after day, a weary waste of hours,
Bearing within his life the brooding care
That ever fed on its decaying flame.
And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair,
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering,
Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand
Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;
Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone,
As in a furnace burning secretly,
From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,
Who ministered with human charity
His human wants, beheld with wondering awe
Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,
Encountering on some dizzy precipice
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of Wind,
With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet
Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused

In its career; the infant would conceal
His troubled visage in his mother's robe
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,
To remember their strange light in many a dream
Of after times; but youthful maidens, taught
By nature, would interpret half the woe
That wasted him, would call him with false names
Brother and friend, would press his pallid hand
At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path
Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there,
Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.
It rose as he approached, and, with strong wings
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course
High over the immeasurable main.
His eyes pursued its flight: — "Thou hast a home,
Beautiful bird! thou voyagest to thine home,
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.
And what am I that I should linger here,
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven
That echoes not my thoughts?" A gloomy smile
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.
For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly

262 *its* ‖ *his*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,
Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange
charms.

Startled by his own thoughts, he looked around.
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.
A little shallop floating near the shore
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.
It had been long abandoned, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints
Swayed with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste;
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny; sea and sky
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the
waves.
Following his eager soul, the wanderer
Leaped in the boat; he spread his cloak aloft
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.

As one that in a silver vision floats
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds
Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled

312 *Leapt*, Rossetti.

The straining boat. A whirlwind swept it on,
With fierce gusts and precipitating force,
Through the white ridges of the chafèd sea.
The waves arose. Higher and higher still
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge
Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.
Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast
Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven
With dark obliterating course, he sate:
As if their genii were the ministers
Appointed to conduct him to the light
Of those belovèd eyes, the Poet sate,
Holding the steady helm. Evening came on;
The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues
High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray
That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of Day;
Night followed, clad with stars. On every side
More horribly the multitudinous streams
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war
Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock
The calm and spangled sky. The little boat
Still fled before the storm; still fled, like foam
Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;
Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave;
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass
That fell, convulsing ocean; safely fled —

327 *running*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].
349 *ocean; — safely*, Rossetti || *ocean. Safely*, Shelley, 1816.

As if that frail and wasted human form
Had been an elemental god.

At midnight
The moon arose ; and lo ! the ethereal cliffs
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone
Among the stars like sunlight, and around
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves
Bursting and eddying irresistibly
Rage and resound forever. — Who shall save ? —
The boat fled on, — the boiling torrent drove, —
The crags closed round with black and jagged
arms,
The shattered mountain overhung the sea,
And faster still, beyond all human speed,
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,
The little boat was driven. A cavern there
Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths
Ingulfed the rushing sea. The boat fled on
With unrelaxing speed. — " Vision and Love ! "
The Poet cried aloud, " I have beheld
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death
Shall not divide us long."

The boat pursued
The windings of the cavern. Daylight shone
At length upon that gloomy river's flow ;
Now, where the fiercest war among the waves
Is calm, on the unfathomable stream
The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain,
riven,
Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,
Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell

Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass
Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;
Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved
With alternating dash the gnarlèd roots
Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms
In darkness over it. I' the midst was left,
Reflecting yet distorting every cloud,
A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.
Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,
With dizzy swiftness, round and round and round,
Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,
Where through an opening of the rocky bank
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot
Of glassy quiet 'mid those battling tides
Is left, the boat paused shuddering. — Shall it sink
Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress
Of that resistless gulf embosom it?
Now shall it fall? — A wandering stream of wind
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,
And, lo! with gentle motion between banks
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,
Beneath a woven grove, it sails, and, hark!
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar
With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.
Where the embowering trees recede, and leave
A little space of green expanse, the cove
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers
Forever gaze on their own drooping eyes,

Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave
Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,
Which naught but vagrant bird, or wanton wind,
Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay
Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed
To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,
But on his heart its solitude returned,
And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid
In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame,
Had yet performed its ministry; it hung
Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud
Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods
Of night close over it.

The noonday sun
Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence
A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,
Scooped in the dark base of their aëry rocks,
Mocking its moans, respond and roar forever.
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as, led
By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,
He sought in Nature's dearest haunt some bank,
Her cradle and his sepulchre. More dark
And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
Of the tall cedar overarching frame
Most solemn domes within, and far below,
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,

424 *those*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

The ash and the acacia floating hang
Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around
The gray trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,
With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs,
Uniting their close union; the woven leaves
Make network of the dark blue light of day
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms
Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen
Sends from its woods of musk-rose twined with jasmine
A soul-dissolving odor to invite
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell
Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
Like vaporous shapes half-seen; beyond, a well,
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
Images all the woven boughs above,
And each depending leaf, and every speck
Of azure sky darting between their chasms;
Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star,

Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,
Or painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon,
Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld
Their own wan light through the reflected lines
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth
Of that still fountain; as the human heart,
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard
The motion of the leaves — the grass that sprung
Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel
An unaccustomed presence — and the sound
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs
Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed
To stand beside him — clothed in no bright robes
Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,
Borrowed from aught the visible world affords
Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;
But undulating woods, and silent well,
And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,
Held commune with him, as if he and it
Were all that was; only — when his regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness — two eyes,
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
And seemed with their serene and azure smiles
To beckon him.

464 *one* || *the*, Forman conj.
486 *for*, omit, Dobell conj.

Obedient to the light
That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing
The windings of the dell. The rivulet,
Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine
Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell
Among the moss with hollow harmony
Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones
It danced, like childhood laughing as it went;
Then, through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept,
Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
That overhung its quietness. — "O stream!
Whose source is inaccessibly profound,
Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?
Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness,
Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs,
Thy searchless fountain and invisible course,
Have each their type in me; and the wide sky
And measureless ocean may declare as soon
What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud
Contains thy waters, as the universe
Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched
Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste
I' the passing wind!"

Beside the grassy shore
Of the small stream he went; he did impress
On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught
Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one
Roused by some joyous madness from the couch
Of fever, he did move; yet not like him

Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame
Of his frail exultation shall be spent,
He must descend. With rapid steps he went
Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now
The forest's solemn canopies were changed
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.
Gray rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
The struggling brook; tall spires of windlestrae
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
And nought but gnarlèd roots of ancient pines
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here
Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs: — so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions. Calm he still pursued
The stream, that with a larger volume now
Rolled through the labyrinthine dell; and there
Fretted a path through its descending curves
With its wintry speed. On every side now rose
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
In the light of evening, and its precipice
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,

530 *roots* || *trunks*, Rossetti.

546 *its precipice* || *amidst precipices*, Forman conj.; *their precipice*, E. S. conj.

547 *inclosed*, Miss Blind conj.

'Mid toppling stones, black gulfs and yawning caves,
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues
To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
And seems with its accumulated crags
To overhang the world; for wide expand
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-colored even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
In naked and severe simplicity,
Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast
Yielding one only response at each pause
In most familiar cadence, with the howl,
The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams
Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river
Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,
Fell into that immeasurable void,
Scattering its waters to the passing winds.

Yet the gray precipice and solemn pine
And torrent were not all; —one silent nook
Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain,
Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,
It overlooked in its serenity
The dark earth and the bending vault of stars.

548 *Mid* ‖ *Hid*, Madox Brown conj.

It was a tranquil spot that seemed to smile
Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped
The fissured stones with its entwining arms,
And did embower with leaves forever green
And berries dark the smooth and even space
Of its inviolated floor; and here
The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore
In wanton sport those bright leaves whose decay,
Red, yellow, or ethereally pale,
Rivals the pride of summer. 'Tis the haunt
Of every gentle wind whose breath can teach
The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,
One human step alone, has ever broken
The stillness of its solitude; one voice
Alone inspired its echoes; — even that voice
Which hither came, floating among the winds,
And led the loveliest among human forms
To make their wild haunts the depository
Of all the grace and beauty that endued
Its motions, render up its majesty,
Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,
And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,
Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss,
Commit the colors of that varying cheek,
That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes.

The dim and hornèd moon hung low, and poured
A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge
That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist
Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank
Wan moonlight even to fulness; not a star
Shone, not a sound was heard; the very winds,

Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice
Slept, clasped in his embrace. — O storm of death,
Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night!
And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still
Guiding its irresistible career
In thy devastating omnipotence,
Art king of this frail world! from the red field
Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital,
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed
Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,
A mighty voice invokes thee! Ruin calls
His brother Death! A rare and regal prey
He hath prepared, prowling around the world;
Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and men
Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,
Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
Did he resign his high and holy soul
To images of the majestic past,
That paused within his passive being now,
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk
Of the old pine; upon an ivied stone
Reclined his languid head; his limbs did rest,
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink
Of that obscurest chasm; — and thus he lay,

Surrendering to their final impulses
The hovering powers of life. Hope and Despair,
The torturers, slept; no mortal pain or fear
Marred his repose; the influxes of sense
And his own being, unalloyed by pain,
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there
At peace, and faintly smiling. His last sight
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed
To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills
It rests; and still as the divided frame
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
That ever beat in mystic sympathy
With Nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still;
And when two lessening points of light alone
Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
The stagnate night: — till the minutest ray
Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.
It paused — it fluttered. But when heaven remained
Utterly black, the murky shades involved
An image silent, cold, and motionless,
As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.
Even as a vapor fed with golden beams
That ministered on sunlight, ere the west
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame —
No sense, no motion, no divinity —
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings

647 *horns*, James Thomson conj.
648 *dim*, James Thomson conj.

The breath of heaven did wander — a bright stream
Once fed with many-voicèd waves — a dream
Of youth, which night and time have quenched forever —
Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.

Oh, for Medea's wondrous alchemy,
Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam
With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! Oh, that God,
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice
Which but one living man has drained, who now,
Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels
No proud exemption in the blighting curse
He bears, over the world wanders forever,
Lone as incarnate death! Oh, that the dream
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,
Raking the cinders of a crucible
For life and power, even when his feeble hand
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law
Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled,
Like some frail exhalation, which the dawn
Robes in its golden beams, — ah! thou hast fled!
The brave, the gentle and the beautiful,
The child of grace and genius. Heartless things
Are done and said i' the world, and many worms
And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth
From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,
In vesper low or joyous orison,
Lifts still its solemn voice: — but thou art fled —
Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee

Been purest ministers, who are, alas!
Now thou art not! Upon those pallid lips
So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes
That image sleep in death, upon that form
Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear
Be shed — not even in thought. Nor, when those hues
Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone
In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
Let not high verse, mourning the memory
Of that which is no more, or painting's woe
Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,
And all the shows o' the world, are frail and vain
To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.
It is a woe "too deep for tears," when all
Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

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